

OF

Le

LAZARE HOCHÉ

GENERAL IN COMMAND

OF THE ARMIES OF THE MOSELLE, OF ITALY;
OF THE COASTS OF CHERBOURG, OF BREST AND OF
THE OCEAN;
OF SAMBRE-ET-MEUSE AND OF THE RHINE;
UNDER THE CONVENTION AND THE DIRECTORY,
1793—1797.

BY

EMILE DE BONNECHOSE.

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH, WITH EXPLANATORY NOTES ON THE GRAMMATICAL
CONSTRUCTION AND PECULIARITIES IN PRONUNCIATION
OF THE FRENCH TEXT,

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BIOGRAPHY

OF

LAZARE HOCHÉ.

FIRST PART.

I.

EARLY DAYS.—HOCHÉ IN THE FRENCH GUARDS.

LAZARE HOCHÉ was born¹ at Versailles on the 24th of June, in the year 1768.² His father, an old soldier, filled the humble position of kennel-keeper³ in the hunting department of the King; his mother died two years after his birth. His aunt, a greengrocer at Versailles, suburb of Montreuil, took⁴ a fancy to the child, and bestowed some care on his primary education. Young Hoche soon became prominent⁵ in the exercises and the sports of the school among the children of his age, and he gained by his amiability and his aptness the affections of his maternal uncle, the Abbé Merlière, curé at St. Germain-en-Laye. The latter gave him⁶ a few lessons; he added the rudiments of Latin to the first instruction received at school, and made him a choir boy in his church.

¹ *Naquit*, from *naître*.

² Note the spelling of *mil* here.

³ *Garde-chenil*, *l* silent.

⁴ *Prit*, from *prendre*, lit. took.

⁵ *Se fit remarquer*. *Faire* before inf., meaning to cause.

⁶ Remark the position of the pron. in this case.

Lazare Hoche was fifteen¹ when he obtained a supernumerary position in the Royal stables; but a soldier by instinct, he had an active and enterprising mind. A book of travels awoke in him the taste for adventures and distant enterprises; he wished to enlist at the age of sixteen in the colonial troops, but he was deceived² by a recruiting sergeant; and when³ he was under the impression he had enlisted in a regiment bound for the East Indies, he found himself,⁴ contrary to his will, incorporated in the French⁵ Guards.

Intelligent and skilful, one month sufficed for young Hoche to pass from the manual to the field exercises. He made quite as rapid progress in the esteem of his chiefs and of his comrades; he already captivated all hearts by his kind, upright and benevolent disposition, whilst he also attracted all eyes by his lofty and commanding figure, by the regularity of his features, still further enhanced by a noble and martial appearance; and he had scarcely been a year in the service when the grenadiers of his regiment, garrisoned in Paris, expressed a desire to have him as their comrade. Their request was granted, and Hoche took his position in their midst.⁶ It was in the year 1785, and even then was⁷ felt on all sides the approach of the great political and social movement which culminated in the French Revolution, and of which the first, the best, and the most lasting results, perhaps, were the total destruction of privileges and the overthrowing of

¹ Note well the difference of idiom; *to be* instead of *to have*.

² *Tromper*, to deceive, but *se tromper*, to be mistaken.

³ *Lorsque* and *quand* are synonymous, but never ask a question with *lorsque*.

⁴ *Se trouver* has sometimes the meaning of to happen, to be, according to context.

⁵ Note the position of adjectives of nation.

⁶ Observe the great difference between *parmi* and *entre*. *Parmi eux*, but *entre les bras*.

⁷ *L'on*; *l* for the sake of euphony. The origin of this *l*, according to Brachet, is that *on* formerly was parsed as a noun. The indefinite active form must be used in French instead of the passive.

the obstacles which obscurity of birth or want of fortune opposed¹ to personal merit. Though of humble extraction, but worthy of rising to the highest ranks by his intelligence and his great heart, Hoche hailed with enthusiasm the approach of a revolution which promised to give a free field for the production of talent and genius. He deplored his want of education ; he knew the assistance and the strength which it gives² to personal qualities, and he was in a position to understand how the culture of the intellect facilitates the progress of man in the moral order, and what charms it spreads over all his existence. He was consequently³ eager for knowledge, but he needed books ; his slender pay scarcely furnished what was strictly necessary for his material requirements. The means which his soldier's pittance⁴ did not furnish him he found in a custom tolerated in the chosen corps to which he belonged. The regiment of the French Guards, incorporated in 1563, being for two centuries the king's guard, was considered as the crack regiment of France. It enjoyed several privileges, only received Frenchmen in its ranks, and had its quarters in Paris⁵. The soldiers had the permission to increase their pay by carrying on several trades in the city, and the intimate and daily intercourse which they thus kept up with the inhabitants⁶ contributed in a powerful manner to bring them over at the outset of the Revolution to the popular cause. Hoche, more than any other, showed himself ingenious in multiplying the means of employing his leisure moments usefully ; in winter he embroidered forag-

¹ Remark that the nominative in a sentence often comes after the verb.

² Note well the great difference in meaning of the following : *porter, apporter, remporter, reporter, rapporter* and *mener, amener, ramener, remmener*.

³ *Donc* ; *c* silent here, but at the beginning or end of a sentence the *c* is sounded as a *k*. The exact meaning of *donc* in this sentence cannot be rendered in English.

⁴ *Solde*, regular pay ; *pécule*, savings.

⁵ All names of cities require the preposition *à*.

⁶ *Habitants*. Note well that the *h* is quite silent.

ing caps and vests ; in summer he went about in the outskirts¹ of Paris, obtaining employment from the gardeners, drawing water, watering and digging for them. With the money thus obtained he purchased books ; but it was difficult for him to introduce much variety in his acquisitions. The histories of the republics of Greece and Rome ; the words and the actions of their great men, quoted² then at every turn³ in the writings of the day, and many works of current controversy, filled with excited expressions consequent on the times, fell into his hands. They increased his knowledge, but sometimes in a way more unwholesome than profitable, and further increased his enthusiasm for all new theories and for the revolutionary cause. However, a laudable ambition, seconded⁴ by a firm will, by the spirit of order and of work, and by a deep sense of duty, stimulated his ardour ; but he had not yet acquired⁵ a sufficient control over himself. Violent and irritable, his anger nevertheless often arose out of upright and generous feelings, which later⁶ having been better regulated, became virtues, and it was especially when he thought he was defending the interests of justice and humanity that he allowed himself to be drawn beyond all limits. Hoche hated delation and perfidy. For these causes a corporal of his regiment had made himself hated by his comrades, and he was at the same time feared by all⁷ on account of his great skill in fencing. Hoche challenged him to fight⁸ a duel, received a sabre cut which split his forehead, and he in his turn thrust his sword to the hilt through his opponent's body.

¹ Note well the difference in meaning between the following : *pays, patrie, campagne*.

² *Cités* ; masculine plural, because preceded by nouns of different genders.

³ *A propos* corresponds to the Eng. expression, By the by.

⁴ *Secondée* ; the *c* as *g*.

⁵ *Acquis* from *acquérir*.

⁶ Note well the difference between *tard* and *en retard*. It is late *il est tard (uni)* ; you are late, *vous êtes en retard*.

⁷ *Tous* ; sound the *s* slightly in this case.

⁸ To convey the complete sense it is sometimes requisite to add or leave out a word.

On another occasion, one of his bravest comrades as well as his friend having been killed in a popular brawl, Hoche, thirsting to avenge¹ him, ran to the house of the murderer, and not finding him, ransacked it. The affair grew to be a serious one: Hoche, brought to trial and condemned to a severe imprisonment, was kept in a cell for three months, deprived of air and light, and fed on bread and water, without change of clothes. He was set at liberty, his clothes in rags, infested with vermin, attenuated, half dead.² He, later, disdained to take an easy vengeance of the one whose exaggerated report had provoked so cruel a chastisement, and he showed himself as prompt in forgetting his own injuries as in avenging those of others.³

These infractions on discipline contributed without doubt, as much as his extreme youth, in rendering his promotion at first slow and difficult. He had already been five years in the service when the eventful year of 1789 dawned, and he was as yet but a simple grenadier in the French Guards. Some months later he was made a corporal. Already he was remarked on all hands by his military gait and martial bearing, which the scar across his forehead still enhanced. As he was marching past in a review at the head of his squad, a woman of high rank, fixing her gaze on him, exclaimed: "What a handsome general that man would make!" Events were destined to make a prophetic word of a thoughtless expression, and that which would have appeared quite improbable and even impossible when uttered, soon became a reality, which was a striking proof, among other extraordinary signs, of a deep revolution in old established customs, and of a complete social renovation.

¹ *Venger*; note well the preserving in verbs in *ger* of *e* before *a* or *o*.

² *Demi-mort*; *demi*, invariable when preceding, and variable as to gender when following, a noun. It takes the mark of the plural when used as a substantive, *les demies*.

³ *Autrui*, always preceded by a preposition, and can only be used for *others* in a general sense.

II.

CAUSES AND PRELUDES OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.—THE
BASTILLE.¹—MEMORABLE DAYS IN OCTOBER.

In order to appreciate at this epoch, and in the sequel, the character and conduct of Hoche at the beginning of the Revolution, we must set forth briefly, but with precision, the principal object of this great crisis which so entirely transformed French society, and the results of which were felt in the most remote countries in² Europe. Its promoters wished to bring about the reform of innumerable abuses consequent³ on the feudal *régime*, of the absolute power of the Crown, and of the unequal distribution of public offices.* They demanded civil equality, and the participation of all in the levying of taxes and in the compiling of laws. These results were desired by the most enlightened portion of the nobility, by the majority of the clergy, and especially by the citizens⁴ and the working classes. These things, however, could not be obtained without coming in contact with numerous prejudices, without interfering with a number of interests, nor without the violent uprooting of inveterate habits and secular usages, which the King, his family, his court, and a large number of privileged people,⁵ considered as vested rights, and as the only guarantee possible for the maintenance of a wise and settled government.

On the other hand, a number of celebrated writings, read

* The burdensome and vexatious imposts of the villain tax and statute labour only oppressed the commoners and the plebeians.

¹ The Bastille; state prison founded in 1374, in the reign of Charles V., and destroyed in 1789.

² After a superlative trans. in by de.

³ *Nés*, from *naître*, to be born.

⁴ *Bourgeois*—*Bourgeoisie*. These words have no exact equivalent in English, and they are therefore frequently used in English. Foreign words introduced in a language should, if possible, be pronounced according to the rules of the language to which they belong.

⁵ Privileged people means here nobles, and all favored by the King.

with avidity, had caused the new principles of political and social regeneration to sink far into the hearts of the masses. These publications, whilst addressing themselves to public reason and generous sentiments, had also awakened dangerous instincts, blind and violent passions, still further excited by the remembrance of long sufferings, and which the light of experience could neither direct nor restrain. Hearing every day these attacks against the laws then in force, against the established privileges and authorities, and liberty, rights and powers being demanded for all, it was impossible that the multitude should not soon be inclined to confound its rights with its desires, liberty with license, horror of oppression with hatred¹ for all discipline, and it was to be foreseen² that great perils and numberless difficulties would arise from so complex a situation. Deeds by far surpassed all these forebodings.

Exaggerated pretensions, imprudent acts, and culpable excesses, provoked a violent reaction on the part of the Court. The National and Constituent³ Assembly, composed of the deputies of all the different elements, and convened in May, 1789, had been gradually led to seize upon almost all powers; after having done a great deal to meet the wishes of the country, and to cope with⁴ the requirements of the situation, it adopted several rash and fatal resolutions, and required all its acts to be accepted and sanctioned by the Crown. The King, Louis XVI., was the first to give the example of wise reforms; his aspirations were pure, his heart upright and kind; but he was wanting in knowledge; he was weak, irresolute, and easily gave way to contrary impulse. After having made many concessions which he

¹ *Haine*; *h* fully sounded.

² *Prévoir*; note well the fut. and cond. of this verb.

³ *L'Assemblée Nationale et Constituante*; the assembly to carry out a political constitution. *Constituante* is sometimes used subs.: *La Constituante de 1789, de 1848*. Macaulay calls it the Constituent Assembly.

⁴ Sometimes the difference in construction between English and French requires the insertion of a word not in the text.

judged opportune and compatible with his dignity, he grew frightened at new exigencies which appeared to him opposed to his duty as king, and he tried to struggle against the violence of the revolutionary torrent. He listened to the resentments and complaints of the members of his family,¹ of the courtiers and of the privileged ones unceremoniously deprived of their rights; and believing he saw France as well as his throne in peril, he had recourse to military force to defend the remnants of a power undermined beyond its foundation. Regiments were summoned to Paris and Versailles. The *bourgeoisie* and the ringleaders of the National Assembly appealed to popular passions, and to the threat of bayonets they opposed the insurrection of the multitude. The great questions which agitated all minds departed then from all peaceful debates, to be given up to tyranny, to blind and brutal force. From this arose great excesses, odious crimes, civil war and all its horrors.

The first trial which the multitude made of its strength was the attack on the Bastille, a redoubtable fortress, situated at the extremity of the Faubourg² St. Antoine. There were confined, on a simple royal order or arbitrary warrant, most of those whom the King or his ministers judged fit to arrest and keep as captives, thus depriving them of the justice of the common tribunals legally instituted. The Bastille for this cause was regarded, and justly so, as the monument of a barbarous age, as the citadel of despotism. Paris, in the first days of July, 1789, had been the scene of bloody strifes between the people and the soldiery; the people demanded arms, pillaged the arsenal of the Invalides,³ forged pikes, and on the morning⁴ of the 14th an immense, popular column ran—urged on by the cry of: “To the Bastille!” “To the Bastille!”—to attack that fortress, occupied by a feeble garrison of Swiss soldiers and pensioners.

¹ *Famille*, two *ll* liquid.

² Note that the *g* is silent.

³ *Invalides*. A building constructed by Louis XIV. for old soldiers.

⁴ Note well the difference between *matin's* and *matin*; *matin*, the first hours of the day; *matinée*, the whole morning.

The attack would have failed if three hundred¹ French Guards had not seconded² it. They rushed forward with cannons, and marched at the head of the columns. The Bastille was taken, and bloodshed disgraced the popular victory. Only a part of the French Guards had been induced to join the insurrection of the multitude. Hoche was among those who remained faithful to their colours. Stationed in the Rue Verte with a few recruits, constituting the depot of his battalion, he closed the iron gate of his quarters, did his utmost to prevent its being forced, and defended the cannons entrusted to his care against the assaults of the frenzied populace.

The French Guards were disbanded after the fall of the Bastille, and divided amongst the paid companies of the National Guard to serve under General La Fayette. Hoche entered into that service, and he was sergeant-major of one of these companies at the time of the sinister events, provoked by the arrival of new regiments summoned to Versailles at the beginning of October, 1789. A *fête* had been given to the officers of these troops by their comrades in the large theatre of the château. The King and the Queen, with the young Dauphin in her arms, appeared in the midst of this noisy gathering; the sight of them excited great enthusiasm. White cockades were distributed, and it was asserted that the tri-color and popular emblems had been trampled under foot. The report of this banquet spread all over Paris, and produced the greatest excitement; the arrival of the regiments, their hostile attitude, the fear of the intrigues of the Court, and above all, scarcity of provisions, caused a dangerous uprising. An abandoned woman, Théroigne de Méricourt, gave the signal on the 5th of October, in going through the streets beating a drum. A number of women followed her, asking for bread, and yelling at the top of their voices. Around these soon

¹ *Trois cents*; cent, multiplied by a number, takes the mark of the plural, though it does not when multiplied by one number and followed by another.

² *Secondée*; note agreement after *l'*.

gathered a furious multitude. It was towards Versailles that this disorderly crowd directed its march, and a man named Maillard, an old pettifogging attorney, offered to be their leader. Kept at bay by La Fayette for several hours, they started at last, and spread terror in Versailles.

A first engagement had taken place between the body guards and this lawless crowd, when La Fayette appeared at the head of the National Parisian Guard to oppose them; his presence re-established order, and on the approach of night calm was secured. Whilst all were plunged in sleep a few of the rabble found one of the gates of the château opened; they entered, calling their comrades; the alarm was given, and an encounter took place between them and the body guards¹ on duty, several of whom were killed whilst they heroically defended their position, shouting, "Save the Queen!" Marie Antoinette, warned of the danger, rushed from her bed and took refuge near the King. La Fayette flew to their assistance; he, together with his officers and a few of the grenadiers of the paid National Guard, made their way in the invaded royal residence. Sergeant-Major Hoche was among them; he assisted in repelling the invaders; his conduct was commented on and praised by the general. Hoche had nevertheless, as we have noticed, warmly embraced the principles of a revolution which suppressed privileges and removed the obstacles which interfered with merit; but his common sense, which favoured order and discipline, was opposed to anarchy and popular fury; his great sympathy for the cause of civil equality and liberty had neither deprived him of his uprightness, respect, nor pity, and he considered the violation of the royal abode by the populace, as a dastardly act. Hoche, besides, had a deeply rooted sentiment of honour and duty. He bore in mind on the 6th of October, as on the 14th of July, that the true duty of the soldier was to oppose an insurrection and not to be in its midst, and that

¹ *Garde du corps*, a member of the royal body guard; *corps de garde*, guard-house.

if, in extreme cases, he can break his sword in twain, he is always forbidden to turn it against those who have intrusted him with it for their protection.

III.

PROGRESS OF THE REVOLUTION.—FIRST DEFEATS AND VICTORIES.—HOCHE IN THE ARMY OF THE ARDENNES.

Louis XVI. and his family had been conducted to Paris between the pikes of the multitude who had invaded their palace at Versailles on the 5th and 6th¹ of October; he lived² in the palace of the Tuileries, more a prisoner than a king, under the strict *surveillance* of the Parisian National Guard, forced to sanction a series of measures in opposition to his conscience, and the Revolution followed its course. A social as well as a political revolution, it threatened,³ in Europe as well as in France, all interests connected with the old feudal constitution of society. The French princes and the refugees scattered in foreign courts filled them with their complaints, as well as with their fears and their hopes. They declared that all crowns were aimed at or threatened in the person of Louis XVI., and that France was groaning under the tyranny of a few demagogues, and they rashly prophesied a general uprising of the nation in favour of the King if foreign armies crossed the frontiers of the kingdom.

Thus was prepared, in 1791, the first coalition between the German sovereigns, who compromised Louis XVI. by proclaiming their own cause one with his, and thus rendered his situation more perilous and more cruel.

After an abortive attempt on the part of the Royal family to gain the frontier, followed by its arrest at Varennes, the deposing of the King was proposed; but the Constituent Assembly annulled the motion as unconstitutional; it forced the King to keep⁴ his crown and throne, and at

¹ Cardinals instead of ordinals.

² *Vivait*, from *vivre*.

³ Observe well the use of *cedilla* before *a*, *c*. *z*.

⁴ *Garder*, to keep; *se garder de*, to beware of.

the same time it deprived him of all power, of all the adjuncts of royalty.

Already the Prussians were advancing ; our armies gave way before them ; and France was invaded. To each successful attempt of the enemy there answered, in the midst of the multitude in Paris, greater rage against the King and the Queen, too unfortunate and too much threatened not to be suspected¹ of secret complicity with those who announced that they were marching to accomplish their deliverance, and accused, not without foundation, of having certain intelligence with the princes of their dynasty armed in their favour. Already the populace, whose fury was excited by ardent demagogues, dictated to the Commune or Municipality of Paris and ruled the Assembly. On the 20th June, 1792, it rushed into the Tuileries and heaped outrages on the King ; on the 10th of August² it overthrew the throne, slaughtering its defenders. Louis XVI. and his family were incarcerated in the Temple.³ Nevertheless the enemies advanced ; Longwy was taken and Verdun invested. Popular rage now knew no bounds ; it became exasperated against the nobles and the priests, suspected⁴ of favouring the success of the foreign armies. Thousands of unfortunates⁵ belonging to the old privileged ranks were snatched from their homes and huddled together in the prisons of Paris. On the 2nd of September—day of execrable memory—the vilest populace, encouraged by the concourse of the municipal authorities and by the tacit complicity of the Minister of Justice, Danton, invaded the prisons and massacred all the prisoners with frightful barbarity.

¹ *Soupçonnés* : *c* soft, *soupçon*, used in English, meaning a small quantity.

² Note well the pronunciation of this word *août* ; it is simply *ou*. The prep. *de* sometimes precedes the name of the month, but it is better to omit it.

³ Temple, or rather *Tour du Temple*, the ruins of a monastery. This was the prison of Louis XVI. He entered it on the 14th Aug., 1792, and left it on the 21st of January, 1793, to ascend the scaffold.

⁴ Suspects ; pronounce last part like *paît*.

⁵ Many adjectives are used substantively in French.

My object¹ is not to relate here the bloody scenes of our civil troubles, to which Hoche at this epoch was a complete stranger. I have been obliged, however, to recall briefly that which was indispensable, to give a correct idea of the general situation of the country at the time when his heroic figure appeared on the scene of the great struggle between Europe and invaded France.

The armies were then the focus of all the glories of the fatherland. In no other class of the nation was the sentiment of equality purer, because there was none other where it could be better blended with the strictest equity, and because it was natural and just that the country should show itself grateful and generous towards those who shed their blood for her.* There, the pure enthusiasm of liberty was fostered in all hearts as in days of yore, because in the army the idea of liberty was closely allied to the freedom of the national soil; that idea, awakening the most generous sentiments, had as yet lost nothing of its prestige, and it accomplished on our frontiers what it has done everywhere—it brought forth prodigies of heroism and of devotion. The love of liberty, thus confounded with patriotism, produced yet greater enthusiasm in the minds of the soldiery, on account of the abolition of feudal servitude, which had been so oppressive to their families, and when, to the sound of the dread Marseillaise Hymn, they rushed on the armies of Europe, the hirelings of kings, they believed indeed that they were pressing forward, not only to the aid of the fatherland in danger, but also to the deliverance of the nations yet groaning under the feudal yoke, and whom they named their brethren. That is why the Revolution, in spite of so much violence and so many crimes, remained always popular in our newly organized armies, composed of volunteers; and it is thus, that after a few early reverses,

* Before the Revolution the brevet of officer was only granted, with very few exceptions, to privileged people.

¹ *But; t* fully sounded.

they became invincible.* These reverses were inevitable at the beginning of the Revolution. The officers, belonging at that time for the most part to the old nobility, formed a distinct class from that of the soldiers, and there were in the army two parties, divided in interests and opinions : the chief mistrusted the soldiers, the soldier had no confidence in his chief ; from this arose complete disorder before the enemy, and numerous reverses. Many officers had already left their regiments to follow the princes into exile ; a number of others followed their example in the end, or were driven away by their soldiers. They were replaced in all grades, from the sub-lieutenant to the general, by men who had risen from the ranks, and those of the old general officers, nobles for the greater part, who preserved their command, La Fayette, Beurnonville, Custine, Biron, Dumouriez,¹ Kellermann, had all adopted the principles of 1789, and continued to serve the revolutionary cause with ardour and devotion. Harmony then began to reappear between the chiefs and the soldiers, and from that date our armies won their first victories. They had conquered under Kellermann at Valmy, under Custine on the frontier of the Rhine, under Dumouriez at Jemmapes. Belgium was conquered and the enemy repulsed on all points, when the execution of Louis XVI., one of the most virtuous princes who had ever honoured the throne, and whom the Constitution declared unimpeachable, excited public horror to the highest pitch, deprived the Revolution of a number of hearts which until then had remained devoted to it, and increased tenfold the number of its enemies in Europe and in France. This fatal result of the bloody deed enacted on the 21st of January² is, in my opinion, the most unexceptionable argument against a perverse doctrine, which lays down as a prin-

* The Revolution said to them : "Volunteers ! die for the salvation of all nations, your brethren." Satisfied, they replied, "Yes." Go, my old soldiers, my beardless generals ; and these haughty but poor men were seen advancing before an admiring world.

¹ Dumouriez belonged to an old parliamentary family.

² January 21st ; day of the execution of Louis XVI.

ciple that the violent and criminal acts of the terrorists were indispensable to insure the triumph of the French Revolution. A greater wrong, a more cruel insult, has never been offered to the latter than in supposing that the grand ideas and noble sentiments with which the Constituent Assembly was imbued at its beginning were, four years later, without any serious reason, completely obliterated in all minds, and so far forgotten that it was necessary to replace the rash though generous enthusiasm of 1789 by the Reign of Terror of 1793. If it be true, however, if it be impossible to deny, that by this reign resources which devotion would no longer have given¹ were obtained, it is not less true, and it is important to say, that the Revolutionary cause had already been compromised and lost in the minds of honest men through excesses and crimes perpetrated in its name, and among which the execution of Louis XVI. was the most horrible. The indignation which it inspired encompassed the National Convention with new dangers, and it was thus drawn along in a new path of violence and atrocities, in which it became each day more difficult to stop.* The preceding alliance had

* The Revolution assumed a new character after the massacres of September and the execution of the King; and when one reflects that the Committee of Public Safety, inaugurated in 1793, was led from violence to violence and from crime to crime, so far as to threaten indiscriminately with the revolutionary axe every one, without distinction of class, of sex, or of age, so far as to behead the most illustrious and the most venerable, so far as to sacrifice old men, women, young girls, the poorest as well as the richest, the friends of the revolution as well as its enemies conveyed in numbers to the scaffold,—the following beautiful lines of Racine, addressed by Burrhus to Nero, are recalled to one's memory: "You will be compelled to pass from crime to crime, to sustain your severity by cruelties as rigorous, and wash your blood-stained arms in blood. You kindle a fire which cannot be extinguished. Feared by all the universe, you will have to fear all; ever punish; ever tremble in your projects, and reckon all your subjects as your enemies."—*Britannicus*, Act iv., Scene iii.

¹ Observe the agreement of the participle preceded by its direct object.

only rallied against us two or three powers ; but after the crime of the 21st of January, Europe, horrified, took up arms with unanimity. The Revolution could count as its avowed enemies, England, Holland, Spain, all the Germanic Confederation, Naples, the Holy See, then Russia, and almost at the same time the Vendée rose, threatening and terrible. It was necessary,¹ besides the enemy at home, to contend against three hundred and fifty thousand men of the best troops of Europe, who were advancing on all the frontiers of France. The first effort of this formidable coalition fell on the Army of the Ardennes, the general of which, Dumouriez, was then in Holland ; it was, in his absence, commanded, as well as the Army of the North, by General Miranda, and its winter² quarters were on the right banks of the Meuse, above Liège. The Austrians had resumed the offensive ; they surprised and attacked at Altenhoben, in March,³ 1793, the French brigades, which, under the orders of Gen. Le Veneur, surrounded Maestrecht, put them⁴ to rout, and forced them to raise the siege of that town. It is at this epoch that Hoche first⁵ appears in history. Appointed lieutenant, then soon after captain in the 58th Regiment of infantry, he had already been remarked by General Le Veneur, who had not been slow in appreciating his activity, his intelligence, and his courage ; and he was ordered to protect on that disastrous day the evacuation of the commissariat waggons, and of the artillery, under the fire of the enemy. Hoche carried out this operation with boldness and success. Thanks to him, all the material of war was saved, and the Austrians could not take possession of a single⁶ cannon. General Le Veneur praised most highly

¹ *Fallut*, from *falloir* ; *falloir* demands subjunctive in a restricted sense ; infinitive when speaking in general terms.

² *Hiver* ; sound the r.

³ *Mars* ; ♀ sounded.

⁴ *Mettre*, to put ; *se mettre à*, to commence.

⁵ *Fois* ; remark the difference between *fois* and *temps* : *une fois*, *deux fois*, *trois fois* ; but *beau temps*, *dans les premiers temps*.

⁶ *Seul* differs in meaning according to position ; *un seul homme*, a single man ; *un homme seul*, a man alone.

the young captain who had so valiantly and so successfully executed his orders; he named him his aide-de-camp, and attached him to his service for life. Dumouriez, however, had hastened from Holland, and had stopped the retreat of his army. Taking the offensive in his turn, he marched against the Austrians, gave battle, and was defeated on the 18th March, at Nerwinde. Hoche distinguished himself above all in that battle, and in those which followed at Vertrich and Blangen. Covering the retreat at the passage of the Dyle, in front of Louvain, he struggled incessantly and with indomitable obstinacy. He had two horses killed under him, and continued to fight on foot, rallying the troops and leading them with vigour against the enemy. He afterwards joined his general, who took up his quarters on the frontier in the camp of Maulde. As a reward for his glorious conduct, Hoche was named adjutant-general, chief of battalion, a well merited promotion, but one which his modesty refused, preferring to remain as aide-de-camp to General Le Veneur, who showed him as much esteem as friendship. General Count Le Veneur was among the number of those picked men who, belonging to the French aristocracy,¹ had adopted through conscientious conviction the fundamental principles of the Revolution. The political aspect of France at the dawn of 1789 had not appeared to him to be in keeping either with its civilization or its progress. The royal authority, during several ages, had overthrown or considerably weakened all the barriers which the general and provincial states, the parliaments and the communal liberties, opposed to it. The power of the monarch, limited in principle, had in fact become absolute, and the Government of France, restrained only by established customs,² had become almost similar to that of the Sultans.

After the deplorable reign of Louis XV., during which the country was humiliated before Europe, and ruined in

¹ *Aristocratie*; pron. the termination as if it were *cie*.

² *Moeurs*; s fully sounded.

the interior, Count Le Veneur believed, in common with the most enlightened men of his times, that the hour had come for the nation to take part in the conduct of its affairs. He recognized, on the other hand, that great abuses needed reform ; he found little justice in the obstacles opposed by the traditional institutions and by privileges to free rivalry, to the aspirations of individual strength, and his heart was in unison with his intellect to adhere to the great principle of equality of all¹ in the eyes of the law. The privileges of birth and the voice of personal interest did not stifle in his soul the appeal for natural equity and patriotism. He applauded the generous movement which induced the deputies of a part of the nobility and of the clergy to make, on the 4th of August, 1789, in the Constituent Assembly, the sacrifices of their privileges and of their feudal rights ; and the crimes committed later in the name of liberty, the deeds which dishonoured the cause of the Revolution, whilst filling his soul with the deepest grief, did not shake his firm conviction in the justice of the great principles proclaimed at the commencement of this redoubtable crisis. After the downfall of the King on the 10th of August, even after his execution in January, 1793, Count Le Veneur did not desert his post, in face of the Austrians, on the frontier ; and he believed it his duty, as long as the sword was not snatched from his hands, to preserve it, to turn it against the invaders of his country.

Such were also the sentiments of his young aide-de-camp ; but, in the fiery and quite² republican soul of Hoche, they existed with the effervescence of youth, with the exaltation and with the rashness of passion. Hoche loved with transport a cause with the triumph of which all his future seemed connected, and a social transformation which permitted him to soar to the height to which he felt his talents would lead him. Count Le Veneur had nobly and courageously made the sacrifice of his privileges on the altar of patriotism and

¹ *Tous* ; sound the *s* here.

² *Toute* ; variable here on account of the following consonant.

of liberty, and the same¹ fire which had consumed all his titles had kindled all the hopes of Hoche and given wings² of flame to his genius. From that arose in his manners as in his language an impetuosity, a republican warmth, at which a chief³ belonging to the old nobility might have been offended, if he had been less kind and less wise ; but Count Le Veneur, through all this effervescence of youth, had recognized the hero ; the loyalty of Hoche, his probity, his disinterestedness, and his great patriotism, had captivated his general, and touched his heart. He was seized with the ambition of assisting nature in forming a great man⁴ for the country, to complete the education of this young aide-de-camp, to give him all he needed in experience, in the usages of the world, and in the difficult art of governing men whilst having perfect control over himself. It was thus that he initiated⁵ him in the refined pleasures of a select society which Hoche had never known ; he polished his manners, purified his language, directed his reading, and implanted in the heart of the young man a grateful and filial affection towards himself which only died⁶ out with life. Two years later, in the middle of his first successes, and when the aide-de-camp had been promoted above his old general and commanded our armies, the same intercourse existed between them. Hoche continued to lend a willing ear to him, whom he called his second⁷ father, who blamed the soldier-like tone of his correspondence, of his proclamations, and of his reports, and entreated him to give to his language that character of simple and natural dignity which was imprinted in his attitude and in his whole person. Thus was established between these two men a touching intercourse,

¹ *Même* ; note difference when used before and after the noun : *le même feu*, the same fire ; *le feu même*, the fire itself.

² *Aile*, pronounce *ell* (long).

³ *Chef* ; *f* sounded.

⁴ *Un grand homme*, a great man ; *un homme grand*, a tall man.

⁵ *L'initia* ; *tia* as if *cia*.

⁶ *S'éteignit*, from *éteindre*, to extinguish.

⁷ Second ; *c* as *g*.

which does no less honour to the pupil than to the master. The latter had too exalted a mind to give way to jealousy ; an affectionate and respectful deference was no effort to the former, and gratitude was no burden for his magnanimous heart. They were together at the camp of Maulde when the treachery of Dumouriez was heard of (March, 1793). The latter imputed his last reverses¹ to the Jacobites ;² he felt a perfect horror for the violent measures of the Convention and the tyranny of the commune of Paris, and spoke openly of repairing to the capital and re-establishing the monarchical government. The Convention summoned Dumouriez to its bar, and sent into his camp four deputies to order him to obey and to repair to Paris. Dumouriez refused ; he delivered all four of them into the hands of the Austrians, and prepared to march on Paris at the head of his army, with the Imperialists as auxiliary troops. But the soldiers perceived treason in the conduct of their general ; they abandoned him, and Dumouriez passed into the camp of the Austrians. The example of his perfidy brought disorder into his army and disorganized it before the enemy. Hoche was then selected by his general to give an account³ at Paris, to the Executive Government, of the true state of affairs, and to point out the proper remedies to adopt, to assuage the dangers of the situation. The frightful state in which he found the capital filled him with sadness. The Committee of Public Safety was inaugurating its reign ; all heads were threatened ; all suspected persons filled the prisons ; judgments of the revolutionary tribunal, composed of execrable elements, were without appeal. The struggle at last, a mortal struggle, was going on between the Montagnards, all powerful⁴ in the commune, and with the Jacob-

¹ *Revers* ; *s* silent.

² *Jacobin* ; a member of a political society established in 1789 in Paris, in the old convent of the Jacobins (monks of the order of St. Dominic), for the propagation of democratic ideas.

³ *Compte* ; *p* silent, as well as in *compter*.

⁴ *Tout-puissants* ; *tout*, invariable in this compound in the masculine, but variable in the feminine, *toutes-puissantes*.

ites and the Girondins, who had as yet a majority in the Convention.*

Hoche was received with warmth by the Montagnards, who exhorted him to designate among the Girondins those who had lately corresponded with Dumouriez; they hoped by that means to find a weapon with which to strike them, and to be able to denounce them as accomplices of his treason. Hoche refused this; he had not come,¹ he said, to fill the office of informer, but to enlighten the Government on the present critical situation of the army. His heart was distressed at the spectacle offered in Paris on the eve of the 31st May—fatal day—when the Girondins succumbed; he poured forth his indignation and his grief in his correspondence to his general. "The true field of battle," he said, "is not on the Meuse and the Rhine between the Austrians and ourselves; it is here, in the Convention, between the men of La Gironde and those of La Montagne." He hastened to leave Paris, where liberty, fraternity and equality were nothing more than empty sounds, words void of sense and altogether derisive, where the best citizens trembled before a ferocious populace, and where terror took the place of law. He returned to the army, in the midst of his brave companions in arms, who only heard but a feeble echo of the crimes committed at a distance, and in the heart of whom the pure enthusiasm of 1789, and the love of liberty were as yet confounded with the holy love of the fatherland and with national independence.

* The Girondins were thus named because the most celebrated members of this political party, Vergniaud, Gaudet, Gensonné, had been sent to the Assembly by the department of La Gironde. They sat on the right of the Assembly. The Montagnards, their adversaries, occupied the crest on the left, whence the name by which they were named. The first desired a legal rule and the forms of a constitutional government in the republic which they wished to establish. The second, less enlightened than the Girondins, were much bolder; the most extreme democracy seemed to them the best of governments. They had as principal chiefs, Danton, Robespierre and Marat.

¹ Observe the use of "to be" with *venir*.

General Le Veneur was in the interim, and in the absence of Custine, Commandant of the Army of the North ; he ordered his aide-de-camp to reconnoitre the line of defence which the army had to guard. Hoche went through the country, and a few days sufficed for his keen eye to make the required investigation. He brought back valuable information from his excursion on the frontier. What was his grief when, on his return to the camp, he beheld his chief and his friend, General Le Veneur, surrounded by gendarmes, denounced as being suspected, and served with a summons, which almost always at that epoch was equivalent to a sentence of death. Enraged at this sad spectacle by indignation and anger, Hoche cried, "Do Pitt and Cobourg then govern France, since the Republic is deprived of its bravest defenders?" Imprudent words, and which almost cost the life of him who pronounced them. Forgetting the storm he had thus drawn on his head, Hoche put in writing the observations he had made, and drew up several military memoirs¹ justly considered as master-pieces.² His attention had not only been directed on the frontier which he had visited, but on all the points where the Republic seemed to him vulnerable. The Vendée, which was rising, then attracted his attention. Already all that district was up in arms ; it had fought its first battles, and the Republicans recoiled before the La Rochejaquelein, the Bonchamp the d'Elbée and the Lescure. Hoche saw the errors which they had made ; he perceived at once the very peculiar tactics which war required in this country, which he had never seen but which he studied in military reports and on maps. He pointed out the necessity of establishing entrenched camps there, of forming flying columns, of imitating in its manner of fighting an almost imperceptible enemy ; and in this young captain of twenty-four summers the general-in-chief of the Armies of the West and of the Ocean could be traced.

¹ *Mémoire*, meaning memoir, is masculine ; *mémoire*, memory, feminine.

² *Chefs-d'œuvre* ; pronounce *chefs, ché*.

In another memoir which he wrote on the mode of warfare in the North, Hoche revealed by instinct the genius of the military art of modern times, and the advice which he gave is but the prelude of the revolution brought about later by Bonaparte in tactics and strategy. "Routine," he said, "is our ruin; the art of war must be regenerated. . . . Let us level the strongholds which we can no longer defend without being disseminated, and let us place ourselves boldly in the centre of the armies of the enemy. Stronger united than each one of them isolated, let us march from the army which we shall have conquered to the one we have to conquer."¹ He afterwards indicated the names of the citadels which must be levelled to the ground, those the garrison of which must be reduced, the position to occupy by the Armies of the Ardennes and of Moselle; he gives at last, says his biographer already mentioned, all the details of the plan which was adopted in the campaign of 1794, on which rests the reputation of Carnot, and the conclusion of which was the victory of Fleurus.

Hoche was completing the drawing up of this memoir when he was arrested. The order was given to arraign him before the revolutionary tribunal of Douai, suspected² on account of his devotion to General Le Veneur, and accused of having said that Pitt and Cobourg governed France. Hoche, without emotion, addressed his last memoir to Couthon, member of the Committee of Public Safety, whom he had met accidentally in Paris, and wrote to him the following noble epistle, in which he delineates his own character. "As I had promised it you, citizen, I forward you my work on the frontier of the North; this is without doubt the result of a patriotism more ardent than enlightened, but could you believe that it is the effort of a young man arraigned before the revolutionary tribunal? Whatever may be my fate, let the country be saved, and I

¹ *Vaincre*; note that the three persons singular of the ind. present are not used; *Je suis victorieux* is used instead.

² *Suspect*; pronounce as if *pè*.

shall be content. But at every moment the danger increases. . . . Your generals have no plan ; there is not among them to-day a man able to save the frontier. I ask you then to be heard, either before the committee or by the deputies near the armies. Let me be allowed to work in a cell, fettered though I be, until the enemies be driven from France. I am certain to indicate the means of driving them away before six weeks ; afterwards, let them do what they will with me."

Couthon read this letter to the committee, before whom he pleaded the cause of Hoche with success, and the order was given to set him at liberty at once. Hoche was named adjutant-general, chief of battalion in the Army of the North. Three months later he was placed with that rank under the orders of General Souham, at Dunkirk, and particularly entrusted with the defence of that town.

IV.

DUNKIRK.—WISSEMBURG.¹

Two hostile armies surrounded Dunkirk. One of twenty-one thousand English and Hanoverians, under the Duke of York, besieged the town on the ocean side ; the other army, of about sixteen thousand men, under Marshal Freytag, protected the siege on the Lille side in front of the marshes so as to hinder the place from being relieved. Dunkirk seemed then unable² to sustain a long siege ; the circle being extensive and the forts detached, would have required for their defence fifteen thousand soldiers ; the garrison scarcely contained half that number ; it was dejected and demoralized by a continual series of reverses. Hoche found the fortifications in a deplorable condition, the ditches partly filled and not puddled ; no assistance, in short, could be expected from people whom the Convention had alienated ; a flotilla had been ordered to protect Dunkirk ; the crews

¹ Wissemburg ; pron. as *Vis*.

² *Hors* ; *s* silent.

rebelled at the sight of the enemy,¹ and the vessels re-entered the port.

Anything like serious resistance appeared then quite out of the question. Hoche alone ventured to hope for success; he was but twenty-four years of age, with a subordinate rank, and already he spoke and acted as a master, a man sure of himself, and who commanded at once confidence and obedience. He corresponded with the Committee of Public Safety and with the deputy of the Minister. He wrote to the first: "The place shall be reduced to ashes before we surrender." To the second he writes: "If the Citizen Guard undertake to force us, it must expect to see the arms destined to fight tyrants and traitors turned against it." This resolution, said one of his latest biographers, he communicated to the hearts of his soldiers, and reanimated them; he re-established discipline in their ranks, and made them work before leading them against the enemy. At the same time he drove out of the town the strangers and all suspected individuals; he dismissed and imprisoned the temporary governor of the place, who commanded with effeminacy; re-established the popular society which had been dissolved—spoke, wrote, excited, warned, electrified all souls. Led by his entreaties as well as by his threats, the sailors went back to their duty, and he induced them to return to the station which they had abandoned. At last, at the end of a few days, he was able to write to Audouin: "They promised us prompt² and powerful assistance, but even should they delay a fortnight, in the state in which, by dint of work, the place is at present, we could wait for it." The expected assistance was at hand; a part of the Army of the North was advancing rapidly, guided by the Generals Houchard and Jourdan. On the 5th³ of September it attacked the positions of Marshal Freytag, forced him to fall back on Furnes, and on the 8th⁴ September, 1793,

¹ *Ennemi*; pronounce first syllable as in English.

² *Prompts*; pronounce as if *pron*.

³ *Cinq Septembre*; *q* silent in *cinq* in this case.

⁴ *Huit Septembre*; *t* silent in *huit* in this case.

Houchard forced Freytag to stop, and attacked him at Hondschotte, a few leagues from Dunkirk. At the report of the cannon Hoche made a vigorous sortie, attacked the English and Hanoverian troops under the walls of the town; he thus hindered the Duke of York from assisting Marshal Freytag with any efficacy, and contributed in a powerful manner to the victory of Houchard. Freytag was obliged to fall back on Furnes. The Duke of York saw the victorious French army at Hondschotte about to fall on him; he hastened to leave the dangerous position he then occupied before Dunkirk, between the marshes of Longmoor and the ocean, abandoned the artillery and the baggage, and raised the siege.

It is to Hoche especially that the honour of this glorious result belongs; to him who, showing himself at the same time chief and soldier, administrator and popular tribune, imparted the electric fire of his soul to the heart of a divided and discouraged garrison, and placed in a fortnight a dilapidated fortress in a position to resist and overcome a powerful enemy. The masterly defence of Dunkirk had drawn on Hoche the attention of the Committee of Public Safety, and great hopes of his talents were formed in consequence. In the space of six weeks he was the object of three nominations in succession, and promoted from the rank of major to that of brigadier general, from general of division, and at last, on the 23rd October, 1793 (2 brumaire, year two¹), was named general in chief of the Army of Moselle. The first successes of this army, as well as those of the Army of the North and the Army of the Rhine, had been followed by great reverses.

The French, after having advanced as far as Liége under Dumouriez, and having taken Mayence and Frankfort under Custine, had withdrawn from the centre of Belgium as far as Valenciennes, and from the borders of the Rhine even into the Vosges, behind the lines of the Lauter. "Thanks to the talents and the energy of Hoche, Dunkirk

¹ *Brumaire*; 2nd month of autumn; *bruma*, mist, fog.

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had resisted," says one of his biographers, "but the two other barriers of France had succumbed." Mayence was in the power of the Prussians; Valenciennes and Le Quesnoy saw the imperial standards wave over them; the Army of the North had withdrawn behind the line of the Scarpe, between Arras¹ and Douai, and Hoche had found the Army of the Moselle without backbone and without strength, scattered along a line of about twenty-five leagues. In front of this army, of which Hoche had just taken command, one hundred thousand soldiers, under the command of the best generals of Prussia and Austria, occupied the lines of Wissemburg, kept Landau blockaded, and, entrenched on the outpost of Kayserlautern, their columns were advancing on the Sarre and beyond the Blise. They were inured to war, disciplined, well clothed, well paid, well fed. Encouraged by our reverses, these armies had the audacity which victory gives, and, compared to our troops—without bread, without clothes, and bare feet²—they were at once superior to us by their organization and by their moral tone.

Hoche was scarcely promoted when, recalling the recent victories of Houchard at Hondschotte and of Jourdan at Wattignies, he said to his soldiers: "Frenchmen, on all sides our armies are triumphant; we are the last to conquer, but we shall be victorious. Patriots such as you, if they are disciplined, have but to undertake. We are going to spread liberty, but that is not enough; we must make her be loved. This time your conquests will not be in vain; to fight and to take advantage of triumph is your lot. . . . We are about to enter the promised land, never to leave it more."

Soon discipline was re-established, confidence restored; the proud attitude of Hoche, the energy of his language and of his acts, kindled enthusiasm; he watched with a paternal solicitude over the more pressing needs of the

¹ Arras; *s* sounded.

² *Pieds-nus*; agreement of *nus* because it follows *pieds*.

soldier ; and in the extremity in which he found himself before enemies very superior in number, he had recourse to extreme means, very dangerous ones doubtless in ordinary times, and which could only be rendered legitimate by the imperious necessity of conquering under penalty of death.

Hoche organized his army anew without regard for hierarchy¹ or rights of seniority ; warlike and patriotic ardour, talent and courage, took the place of years or rank. He formed new divisions, took subaltern officers from the ranks and placed their superiors under them ; sergeants became captains and lieutenants were made colonels. An electric commotion thus passed into all ranks, and the fever of ambition, which nothing could moderate, seized upon the chiefs and the soldiers. Excitement was at its height ; Hoche, who had fostered it, was also imbued with it ; his language showed it,² and it imparted to his words, already powerful in themselves, a certain bombastic style, in imitation of the jargon of the clubs,³ which was the stamp of the official writings of this epoch. It is thus that on the 12th November, 1793 (21 brumaire), after having re-organized his army about to act in the Vosges, in concert with the Army of the Rhine, commanded by Pichegru, Hoche wrote to the deputy of the Minister of War : " May the Genius of Liberty be propitious to our arms. The measures are taken, and, if I believe my presentiments, the best cause will triumph. I should survive a reverse, but with difficulty ; if I had this misfortune, I should send our bloody spoils to Paris. Patriots, show them to the people ; let it summon its reserves,⁴ and may its last effort be the death stroke of the tyrants."

The great object of Hoche and his army was the deliverance of Landau, and the retaking of the lines of Wissem-

¹ *Hierarchie* ; *ch* soft.

² *S'en ressent* ; note well that the *ent* here is fully sounded, not being the sign of the third person plural.

³ Clubs ; *s* silent.

⁴ *Arrière-ban* ; reserves composed of the oldest citizens, and only called out in case of great peril.

burg, which form the principal boulevard of France on its extreme north-east frontier. These famous lines are formed by the Lauter and the Sarre falling over the two declivities of the Vosges, to flow, the first on the right of the Rhine, the second on the left, towards the Moselle. Wissemburg is behind the Lauter; Landau, more to the north, is behind the Queich, another tributary of the Rhine. The Vosges, covered by thick forests, are only approachable on a few points; their rocky chain cannot be penetrated or crossed, except at Saverne, Bitche, Pirmasens and Kayserlautern. Wurmser, on the eastern declivity, blockaded Landau and occupied Wissemburg, facing with fifty thousand men the Army of the Rhine, commanded by Pichegru; Brunswick and the Prussian army were on the other declivity, opposite Hoche and his Army of La Moselle; the Sarre separated the Prussians from the French.

The plan of operations imposed on Hoche by the Committee of Public Safety was to cross the Sarre, to drive before him the Prussian army, then intrenched on the right of the river; to skirt the Vosges as far as Kayserlautern; to carry away this post, attacking the Austrians in the rear on the opposite side. Hoche was to co-operate with the army of Pichegru in such manner that Wurmser, taken between the fire of the two armies, would be forced to evacuate Wissemburg and raise the siege of Landau. On the 17th November, 1793 (27 brumaire, year two), the army moved in three columns, and rushed upon the Prussians. The latter abandoned the Sarre, and recoiled over the Blise to the heights of Blise Castel. Hoche rushed in on them. After a bloody struggle the enemy fled towards Deux-Ponts, then to Kayserlautern, where Brunswick reassembled his divisions, and concentrated formidable means of defence. If that position can be won, Hoche will go round the Vosges and raise the siege of Landau. On both sides forty thousand men and a hundred cannons were engaged. The enemy, well intrenched, occupied a superior position; but the enthusiasm of the Republican soldiers seemed irresistible. Hoche gave the signal, throwing

his hat in the air to the deafening cry, repeated a thousand times, of "Vive la République!" and the battle began with fury. Hoche was in the centre; his lieutenants, Ambert and Taponnier, attacked the enemy on the flank. The Prussians, with the Vosges at their back and under cover of their entrenchments, opened a fierce fire on the French, who, decimated and arrested by grape shot, returned to the charge; made several assaults, and were repelled. Finally, after a bloody struggle of two days, their ammunition gave out, and the enemy was reinforced. Hoche saw victory escaping from his grasp; he gave the order to sound the retrograde march, disguising the retreat under this name, and fell back beyond the Blise in an attitude so proud¹ and in such good order, that the enemy did not dare molest him. The audacity and the vigour which Hoche had shown in the execution of a plan of attack the work of the Committee of Public² Safety, which he had less accepted than put up with, made him find some degree of favour from the members of this redoubtable committee, which required victory from its generals under penalty of death, and from which he received, after his defeat,³ words of encouragement and praise.

Hoche, however, to take a signal revenge, had other obstacles to surmount, other adversaries to conquer, than those which the irregularities of the land and the presence of foreign armies offered him. Pichegru was jealous of the rising glory and popularity of his young rival; he seconded him with repugnance, and had only given him his help slowly and in an incomplete manner. Hoche indulged, on this subject, in bitter recriminations against Pichegru; he complained also not to have had for his actions sufficient liberty. He showed himself determined⁴ to take no counsel

¹ *Fier père*; *r* is sounded in the masculine as well as in the feminine.

² Public; *c* sounded.

³ *Échec*; pronounce *échek* both in singular and plural, and in the plural the *s* is not carried on next word.

⁴ *Résolu*, from *résoudre*, has two past participles; *résolu*, resolved; *résous*, dissolved.

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resolved;

in future but his own, and refused to admit into the secret of his approaching operations the representatives Saint Just and Le Bas, sent to the Army of the Rhine by the Committee of Public Safety, having extraordinary powers, and both of them warm protectors of Pichegru. He derived certain strength against them by the assent which he found in two of their colleagues, Lacoste and Baudot, sent by the Convention to the Army of the Moselle, and invested with unlimited powers. The latter gave all the authority to Hoche; they thus provoked the enmity of Le Bas and Saint Just, who, taking immediately the part of Pichegru against Hoche, confirmed the first in his malevolent and jealous disposition, and sought, in the reports which they addressed to the Committee of Public Safety, to make him share their prejudices and their resentments. In that very committee Hoche had made an equally redoubtable adversary in the person of Carnot, who was entrusted with the military operations, and who, by directing them far and near with the knowledge of experience and the instinct of genius, obtained great results, although often committing the error of substituting, for the execution of his plans, his private views to those of the generals. Seeing Hoche determined, after the defeat at Kayserlautern, to listen only to his personal inspiration, and to hide his plans from the committee, he did not dare to deprive him of his command in the position he held before the enemy, and adjourned the crisis. It is now through the defiles of Pirmasens, between the lines of the Queich and the Lauter, that Hoche has determined to pierce the chain of the Vosges and to make a junction with the Army of the Rhine, which was to act in concert with him, and he ordered with as much energy as prudence all the measures necessary to strike a decisive blow. He had himself an eye to everything, took no repose, and gave none to his soldiers. "Repose," he says, "is the rust of courage." He sustained the moral tone of his soldiers by his confidence in success, by patriotism, by the sentiment of honour, by Republican enthusiasm. It was the middle of

winter, the cold was severe, and he did away with the tents as useless baggage in a Republican army; the regiments camped in the open air, the forests of the Vosges sheltered them and kept up their fires. A regiment murmured, and demanded winter quarters; Hoche published in the order of the day that this regiment should not have the honour of participating in the action of the first combat. The soldiers of that corps entreated him to rescind an order in which they saw an intolerable insult; they swore to expiate their fault by their bravery, and they kept their word. Hoche deceived the enemy as to his projects; he cut up the roads and destroyed the bridges in the places where he intended to pass, and he prepared stealthily wooden bridges to take the place of those which he had removed. He kept an impenetrable secret even with his own officers. "If I thought," he said, "that my cap knew my plans, I would cast it in the fire." At last, when everything was prepared, and he had assured himself of the co-operation of the Army of the Rhine, he ordered the march through the Vosges at the pass of Pirmasens, that he might fall on the right flank of the Austrians whilst they were engaged with the army of Pichegru on the eastern declivity. Two formidable redoubts, formed at Reischoffen and at Freischwiller, defended the passage, and their batteries vomited death on the Republican army. Hoche, under the fire of their cannons, conceived the idea of putting them up at auction. "Comrades," he cried gaily, "six hundred livres a-piece!" "Gone!" replied his brave fellows, and they rushed on the redoubts on the double, broke through them, killed the artillerymen, and seized their cannons. The pass was taken; the Austrians fell back on Wert, where they rallied; Hoche rushed on,¹ waged a new combat, drove them before him, and settled at Wert in the position which the enemy abandoned. Wurmsers saw himself overpowered, left the line of the Molter, and waited for the French on the plateau of

¹ *Accourt*; note well that in narration the present in French must be translated by the past in English.

Sulz. Hoche followed him closely, and met him once more face to face on the 23rd December. A marsh separated the two armies; Hoche crossed it, commanded an attack with cannon and bayonet,¹ rode down the Austrians, drove them on the Lauter and into Wissemburg, and effected his junction with the Army of the Rhine.

Unity in command and in action had now become indispensable. Hoche, stifling his resentment against Pichegru, who was very slow in seconding him, expressed the wish that the two armies should be united under one chief, and that that chief should be Pichegru. His request was supported by the deputies, Saint Just and Le Bas. But their colleagues, Lacoste and Baudot, had recognized superior talents in Hoche; by virtue of the unlimited powers which they had received from the Convention, it was to him that they gave the command of the Armies of the Moselle and of the Rhine, and Pichegru, his senior and his equal in position, descended to the second rank, and became his inferior and his subordinate. Hoche prepared everything to regain Wissemburg and its famous lines, guarded by the Austrians under Wurmser, and by the army of the French refugees under the Prince of Condé. The latter was at Lauterbourg; the Austrians advanced in front of Wissemburg, and occupied in an intrenched camp the heights of Geitsberg, protected in the front of the position by a fortress bristling with batteries, and protected by hedges, by trees which had been cut down, and by deep ravines. The Prussian army, under Brunswick, had gone round the Vosges and seconded the efforts of Wurmser. Hoche stationed three divisions on his left to oppose the Prussians; he ordered the Army of the Rhine to fall on the left of the enemy, and to carry Lauterbourg; he himself, in person, intended to direct the attack of the centre on the Geitsberg; and he pointed out to his soldiers the deliverance of Landau as the infallible²

¹ *Baïonnette*, or *bayonnette*; first introduced by Louis XIV., and manufactured at Bayonne.

² *Infaillible*; two *ll* liquid.

result of the victory of the next day. His letters to the Minister of War, as well as the orders which he transmitted to his generals, were couched in a style brief¹ and full of energy, breathing confidence, enthusiasm, and an exalted republicanism, of contempt for the enemies, whom he treated as the vile slaves of tyrants. One feels an impulsive strength, an irresistible force, in the enthusiasm which he imparted to his lieutenants, and amongst them we see Le Fèvre, Championnet, Andreossy, Desaix, Soult,² Moreau, for the most part unknown as yet, but all called to a high destiny, and who were serving under him the apprenticeship to glory.

However, under the weight of an immense responsibility, in the midst of the anxieties of an important command in the face of the enemy, and a prey to a double fever of military and Republican exaltation, he remembered his old chief, General Le Veneur ; he felt the need of pouring forth the different sentiments which agitated him into a heart worthy of understanding him, of gathering, in short, new strength, and to raise himself in his own estimation, by taking as a witness of his thoughts and of his actions before posterity a good man and a friend. On the eve of the decisive battle, and in the silence of night, he collected his thoughts and wrote these lines : " Behold them again, these transports which we beheld in former times in front of the enemy. Discouragement and fright have fled far from us ; I am only surrounded by brave men, marching against the enemy without yielding an inch. Around all the fires kindled on the whole line, I have seen on all their faces the temerity and the audacity which are the precursors of victory. Not a murmur against this bitter wind which sweeps upon us, not a regret for those tents which I condemned from the first. There are few who pride themselves on imitating the conqueror of Rocroi,³

¹ *Bref* ; *f* sounded.

² *Soult* ; *l* and *t* sounded.

³ *Rocroi* or *Rocroy* ; a fortified town in the Ardennes. Battle of Rocroi, won by the Prince of Condé over the Spaniards in 1643.

and whom it will be necessary to awaken for the battle ; but the wind is keen, and I prefer leading them irritated at their want of sleep rather than completely rested by repose, always fatal to enthusiasm in this temperature. Recognized by the greater number, I was everywhere greeted by this cry : ‘ Landau shall be free ! ’ Yes, general, Landau shall be free ; the days of grief and shame have passed. With soldiers so well prepared, an unlimited authority, and the support of the deputies, I must conquer or die ; it is an alternative which I have accepted. Yes, general, if this letter is but the too presumptuous announcement of a success which I believe infallible, it will bear you my last farewell. I am on the eve of the most glorious or the last day of my life.”

The next day, 26th December, 1793 (*nivose*,¹ year two), all the army was on foot before the dawn, and moved to the cry, re-echoed a thousand times, “ Landau, or death ! ” It met on the Geitsberg the enemy’s army, which was also preparing for a general attack, protected by the castle of that name, occupied by several battalions. Nothing could arrest the impetuosity of the French. The château was stormed after an obstinate struggle, and the Austrians withdrew into their entrenched camp of the Geitsberg. The French advanced on the double through a most murderous fire ; all the obstacles were overcome and struck down ; the fight was soon nothing more than a complete rout. Brunswick and the Prussian army covered the retreat of the enemy. Wurmser was driven back into Wissemburg, which he evacuated during the night. The French entered the place ; the allies fell back on the Rhine, whilst accusing each other for their defeat ; and Landau was delivered, in the midst of the cheers of the army and of the whole of France.

¹ *Nivose*, first month of winter ; *nivosus*, snowy.

V.

MARRIAGE OF HOCHÉ.—HIS DEPARTURE FOR THE ARMY OF ITALY.

In announcing to the Committee of Public Safety the capture of the lines of Wissemburg and the raising of the blockade of Landau, Hoche terminated his report with these simple words: "Now that the end is attained, I only wish to be in command of the Army of the Moselle. The command of the two armies is too great a responsibility for a head of twenty-six." This wish which he expressed was granted; but the modesty of Hoche did not protect him from the distrustful suspicions of Robespierre and of the majority of the committee, nor from the private resentment of the redoubtable enemies which he had made in their midst, of Carnot and St. Just, to the advice of whom he had refused to make his plans and his actions subordinate. St. Just and Le Bas, always at their post with the Army of the Rhine, could not besides pardon Hoche for having been preferred to Pichegru in the command in chief of the two assembled armies; and in their reports to the committee they claimed for Pichegru the principal honors of the military operations in the Vosges, and among others the victory of Wert and the deliverance of Landau.

On hearing of this refusal of justice, Hoche could neither contain his indignation nor his anger, which burst forth in language violent and disdainful against his colleague. The committee gave him no reply, and was already thinking of striking him down. The acme of the Reign of Terror had been reached. Robespierre and his colleagues had sacrificed to their suspicious jealousy and to their hatred all who were most eminent by rank, virtue, talent, science, by the splendour of their services, by grace and by beauty: the Queen, Madame Roland, Bailly, Barnave, Malesherbes, the most celebrated constituents, and with them the Girondins, had followed Louis XVI. to the scaffold; the perse-

¹ *Déblocus*; s sounded.

cutors of the Gironde, the most dreaded of the Montagnards, Danton himself, had been struck in their turns, when they showed a tardy horror for so many murders and so much blood. The first chiefs of the Republican armies—Biron, Custine, Luckner, Houchard, the conqueror of Hondschothe—had fallen under the relentless axe of the committee, which pardoned no sooner the pride of victory than the shame of defeat. The popularity of Hoche with the Armies of the East gave umbrage to the committee; it was irritated at the pride, at the temerity of his language, and it resolved to punish this proud and young conqueror; but it dared not to strike him in the middle of the army of which he was the idol, and before overthrowing him it tormented him with indignities, without tiring his constancy or his fidelity. It left him without instructions, without directions, at the head of the Army of the Moselle; at times imposing on him some vigorous order, the execution of which was impossible. Hoche appealed, received no answer, and if he took the initiative, his most simple actions were interpreted against him. Having one day assisted a battalion¹ in distress, deprived of clothes and shoes, he was warned that he was interfering with military administration, and that his responsibility was greatly compromised. The committee carefully concealed its views with regard to him, but Hoche felt himself threatened by a silent and invisible power; the sword of Damocles hung over his head; he recognized the danger of the situation; his sufferings were cruel and his indignation of the deepest, and sometimes discouragement filled his heart with sad forebodings which he did not conceal; and the following lines, addressed to his friend, Dulac, depict fully the state of his mind: “Whether the charts which you advise me of be of any use, I know not, my friend. Filled with disgust, it is no longer the man whom you have known who writes to you; it is an unfortunate wretch, who tries to flee from himself and who can find repose nowhere. I want a

¹ *Bataillon*; two *ll* liquid.

resignation, which I am about to forward, to be accepted without bitterness and in the same spirit as it will be tendered. Warm friend of the Revolution, I thought she would change present customs. Alas! intrigue is still intrigue, and woe to the one who has no protectors. Drawn¹ from the ranks, by whom I know not nor for what reason, I shall return there as I came out, without pleasure as without pain. . . . I have imparted enough of my wretchedness to you. . . . I envy your lot."

Fatigued with his position, and paralysed or annoyed incessantly by the committee, thwarted by so many obstacles which malevolence scattered in his path, Hoche tried to find at the domestic hearth the calm and content which was denied him in public life and in the camp. He had noticed at Thionville, in a fête, a young girl as much distinguished by the correctness of her demeanour as by her beauty. Her father, named Dechaux, was Chief Victualler; but Hoche did not seek in the one whom he wished to make the companion of his life either rank or fortune. His choice was made. He wrote to his friend Privat, entrusting to him the asking in marriage of this young girl. "I ask for affection," he said, "and not for wealth; do not forget it," and he ends with these words in which love, firm trust and serious devotion are depicted: "The woman I love may be assured that she will only want for those things that she will not demand."

This marriage by far surpassed the most ambitious hopes of the parents of the young girl. But the most ardent wish of Hoche was to obtain her from herself; and to make sure of her affection, he wrote to her these lines, inspired by the most delicate and affectionate sentiment:

"MY DEAR ADELAIDE,—The tie which is about to unite you to me is holy and sacred. It is not for a moment that we shall be bound together; it is for ever, for ever. Reflect well on this. Perhaps you have not sufficiently re-

¹ *Tirer*, to draw; *se tirer de*, to get out of; *se tirer d'une mauvaise affaire*, to get out of a bad scrape.

flected on this engagement. Consider me but as a simple citizen ; let not a name too much eulogized by public report make you desirous of becoming the wife of a man whose only ambition is to make you happy. There is yet time. If some other may have drawn your attention, say but a word ; I shall withdraw my pledge to you ; I shall confine myself to remaining your friend, and only crave your esteem. Impart this confidence freely to a man generous and just enough only to complain of fate. If, on the contrary, your heart has not yet beaten for another, give it to my love ; in becoming my wife, become my friend. Let us make no rash oath ; let us promise before the Eternal Creator never to part. I never told a lie. Your heart will be a guarantee for your sincerity."

Hoche had scarcely enjoyed for a few days the bliss of his happy marriage, when the committee, impelled by the influence of Robespierre, of St. Just, and we must add also of Carnot, judged the moment opportune to overthrow in this young hero one of the greatest warriors of the Republic. However, it yet dissimulated, and before striking him, it wished to remove him from his army. Hoche was told that as an acknowledgment for the eminent services which he had rendered, the committee gave him as a reward a more important command, and it entrusted him to continue in the Army of Italy the work of regeneration which he had so well accomplished in the Army of the Moselle. It was to him that it preferred to entrust this difficult mission as being the most fit, and the one alone who could carry it out. Hoche was thus taken away from the love of his soldiers. He obeyed ; he bade his army an affectionate farewell, and announced his departure (March, 1794) in an order of the day remarkable on account of its simplicity: "Citizens, the service of the Republic, our common mother, calls me elsewhere. Continue to merit her praise. The name of the new chief whom you have (Jourdan) has already reached your ears ; with him you cannot fail to annihilate the tyrants banded against our holy liberty, one and forever united ! LAZARE HOCHÉ." He was not, however, mistaken

as to the true intentions of the committee ; he entrusted his misgivings to the deputy Lacoste ; and on the point of¹ setting out for Italy, he transmitted him his farewell, with a copy of his correspondence.

"I wish," he said, "that it may serve to bring the truth to light, and to describe to our posterity what it has cost their fathers to obtain liberty."

VI.

DISGRACE AND CAPTIVITY.

The conqueror of Wissemburg had been preceded by his great renown in the Army of Italy ; it learned with joy that he had been named as the chief, and it made preparations to give him an enthusiastic welcome. The headquarters were at Nice. Scarcely arrived, Hoche, before taking a moment's repose, unrolled² the map of Upper Italy and studied it for a long time ; then he uttered, in pointing to the Alps, this famous saying, repeated later by his more fortunate rival in glory : "The true field of battle is on the other side of those mountains ; that field where victory shall decide between us and Austria."

Temperate, as he always was, he had asked for bread, olives and water, and he had scarcely commenced his frugal repast, when old General Dumerbion, emissary of the Committee of Public Safety and bearer of its instructions, entered. Hoche, without mistrust, rose in deference to his hoary locks, offered him a chair, and invited him to share a supper, the only merit of which, he said smiling, was to recall the repast of Pythagoras with his disciples. Dumerbion, after having shown some embarrassment, drew from his pocket a paper, and read in a harsh tone a decree of the committee couched in these terms : "The Committee of

¹ *Prêt à*, on the point of ; *prêt à mourir* ; *prêt de*, disposed to. *Le voilà prêt de faire en tout vos volontés.*

² Verbs in *oyer* or *ayer*, change the *y* into *i* before *e* mute, though *payer* is yet written by good authors, *je paye*.

Public Safety decrees that the expedition of O'Neill¹, which was to be carried on by General Hoche, shall be entrusted to Citizen Petit Guillaume, General of the Army of the Alps, to whom it has given command to that effect. The deputies of the people in the Army of Italy will cause without delay General Hoche to be arrested, and will send him to Paris under good and safe escort.—CARNOT, COLLOT D'HERBOIS." After having heard this reading, Hoche said calmly, with restrained indignation: "Excuse me, general, I was not aware that you were a gendarme; I was going to retire; I need repose, and my conscience permits me to sleep; to-morrow morning I shall be at your service."* Dumerbion asked him for his sword, and placed guards at the door of his apartment, where several superior officers entered, who, seeing as a prisoner him whom they came to salute as their general, burst forth in warm indignation, at the peril of their lives; several even entreated Hoche to avoid by flight the execrable tribunal before which every prisoner was convicted beforehand. Hoche refused; he replied, "That he owed it to himself to appear before his accusers, and that he did not wish to give an example which might serve as an excuse for traitors in the future or in the past." He spoke to them a long time with a *sang-froid*² and a tranquillity which he preserved throughout in their presence. After having shown in what manner he believed that war was going to be conducted in Italy, he begged of them if they were again witnesses of great injustice, unavoidable without doubt, not to follow the counsels of angry feelings, which always proved fatal. All those who were present, his aide-de-camp especially, burst into tears; but he with a brow still serene, a proud and mild look, endeavoured to

* This warrant, preserved in the family of General Hoche, and communicated by it, is written altogether in Carnot's own handwriting.

¹ O'Neill; a town in Sardinia. The garrison of it had fired on some French parliamentarians, and it was taken and sacked by Admiral Truguet, Oct. 24, 1794.

² *Sang-froid*; *g* and *d* silent.

comfort them ; he appeared like Socrates in the midst of his disciples before the drinking of the hemlock.¹

Hoche asked permission to write. His first letter was to his wife, his dear Adelaide, to whom he admitted that he was going to Paris by order of the Committee of Public Safety, whilst concealing from her that he was under arrest. He wrote the next day to M. Dechaux, his father-in-law, and told him the sad truth. "Whatever may be the motives of my arrest," he said, "being without reproach I am without fear, although there is, without doubt, everything to fear. I do not complain. It is you and Adelaide, both of you, whom I pity. I only suffer because you are about to suffer through me. . . . Hide from her as long as possible that I have become suspected, and that I am deprived of my liberty. . . . In republics, I know it, the general too much loved by the soldiers he commands makes distrustful citizens suspicious ; but I! should I have been suspected ? I see, however, no other grievance² against me except the devotion and the affection of the army. Ah ! well, let me enter again in the class of the other citizens ; I shall be happy, if my example can serve the public cause. After having saved Rome, Cincinnatus went to plough his field. I am far from pretending to equal that great man ; but, like him, I love my fatherland, and if my abasement can prove useful, I only ask to return to the ranks, whence chance and duty have withdrawn me too soon for my own peace."

The pride of a patriotic heart and a spotless conscience breathe in every line of this letter, which one would say was written by a hero in the palmy days of Greece or Rome.

One wonders at finding there the confidence, or at least a vague hope, that in appearing before the revolutionary tribunal he was not hastening to his doom ; and it can be

¹ *Ciguë* ; having the diæresis over the *ë*, the *u* is fully sounded, not pronounced therefore as the word *figue*.

² *Griefs* ; *s* silent.

concluded from this fact, and from many other similar ones, that only a feeble report of the horrors committed in the capital since the fall of the Girondins reached the armies.

Hoche started for Paris—a prisoner, escorted by gendarmes. Scarcely there (12th April, 1794), he asked to be led before the Committee of Public Safety, which had signed the order for his arrest. He met Saint Just in the antechamber, spoke to him, and asked for justice. “Justice will be given you,” briefly replied Saint Just, “that justice which you deserve,” and he ordered the gendarmes to conduct the prisoner to the Carmes, where he pined for five weeks in a fetid cell. Hoche was transferred on the 16th of May to the Conciergerie,¹ from which prisoners only came out to appear before the tribunal, and from the tribunal to the scaffold. The Conciergerie and the other prisons of the capital, the whole of Paris and the principal towns of France, presented then the most frightful spectacle. Anarchy, terror, and murder reigned supreme. “From all the remote parts of France victims were conveyed to the Conciergerie,” said a writer, friend of the Girondins, who was a long time a prisoner with them; “the increase of assassinations was something terrific.” At first fifteen persons were placed in the murderous carts (also called biers on wheels); soon they put thirty, afterwards eighty-four, and everything was arranged to send one hundred and fifty at a time to the place of execution. An aqueduct, destined to hold the blood, was dug in the square Saint Antoine, whither the guillotine had been transported. It was about three in the afternoon when the long processions of the victims descended from the tribunal, passing slowly under long arches between the prisoners. “I saw,” said Riouffe, “forty-five magistrates of the Parliament of Paris, thirty-three of the Parliament of Toulouse, going to meet their death in the same way as they marched formerly in public processions. I

¹ *Conciergerie*; a prison contiguous to the *Palais de Justice*. Several prisons were called *conciergeries*.

saw thirty farmers of the King's Revenue pass with a calm and steady pace ; twenty-five leading merchants of Sedan, pitying, as they marched to death, ten thousand workmen which they left behind without means of support. . . . I saw all those generals whom victory had just covered with laurels, changed so soon into cypress trees ; no complaint was uttered by them ; they marched in silence as if struck with stupor, and only knew how to die." In these slaughters of men, which were called *batches*, on several occasions whole generations were absolutely destroyed in one day ; the venerable Malesherbes, more than eighty years old, was dragged to death at the head of his whole family ; he perished with his sister, his daughter and his son-in-law, and the daughter and son-in-law of his daughter. Four Briennes were killed at the same time. In other *batches* were assembled the most lovely of nature's children ; fourteen young girls of Verdun,* of unsurpassed candour, and who seemed to be young virgins decked for a public fête, were led together to the scaffold.¹ They all disappeared at once, cut down in the flower of their youth ; the court-yard reserved for women looked, on the day after their death, like a flower garden stripped by the storm. . . . Twenty women of Poitou, poor peasants, were also murdered together. . . . In the prisons of Paris were a number of artisans, of labourers, of insignificant men who were perfect ciphers, arrested in the departments, and mixed in the Conciergerie with the most illustrious of men. The obscurity of their lives, their poverty, did not protect them ; for one aristocrat, ten patriots might be counted. The frightful law respecting suspected people enveloped as though in a net all the population of France. The friends of the accused, their relatives, their servants even, were suspected.

In those days people considered as blessings the most painful diseases and wounds, which at all events gave a

* They were accused of having danced at a ball given at Verdun by the Prussians. The eldest was eighteen.

¹ *Echafaud*, scaffold ; *échafaudage*, scaffolding.

chance of escape from the scaffold even if procured at the expense of death. Hoche's father-in-law was arrested and cast into prison, considered guilty for having given him his daughter; his brother-in-law, General Debelle, declared as suspected as being too closely allied to him, rushed into the midst of the enemy at Fleurus, and fell weltering in his own blood, pierced by seven wounds. "God be praised," cried Hoche on hearing of this; "these wounds are a mercy from Heaven."

In the Conciergerie he sought a certain alleviation to his troubles and the forgetfulness of his personal miseries in the intercourse of a select society, in the conversation of men and women distinguished for sundry causes, awaiting, like himself, their sentence of death, and who, though divided in opinion, were united by the sentiment of their common misery. It was there that Hoche made the acquaintance of the charming Duchesse d'Aiguillon, of Madame de Fontenay, who soon after became Madame Tallien, and Joséphine de Beauharnais,¹ predestined to rise to an exalted position, and whom he had met in the prison of the Carmes. Hoche also obtained forced relaxation from work; he drew up certain memoirs, and he had found the means of corresponding with his wife, on whom he did not cease to lavish the marks of the most delicate and tender love. It was on her account that he suffered and was uneasy. On hearing of the arrest of his father-in-law, he wrote to her: "Why has cruel fate placed me on thy path? If I had not met thee, thou wouldst be happy in the bosom of an honoured family. Forgive me; I could not foresee² that I should bring thee such torments and such *ennui*." He did not tremble for his own fate, and never perhaps did he show more true greatness than at the time when he saw himself, in the brilliancy of his glory, hurled to the very depth of the abyss. He preserved in his fetters and while

¹ Joséphine de Beauharnais, first wife of Napoleon the First; Maria-Louise, Archduchess of Austria, was his second wife.

² *Prévoyais*; future, *prévoirai*.

awaiting his execution all the freedom of his mind, a perfect equanimity, and always the same devotion to his country and to the cause he had served so well. He looked with devotion on the great principles in the name of which the Revolution had been inaugurated, and from which she had so widely strayed; he had made a vow to worship them in the deepest recesses of his heart; and as the faithful do not hold their church responsible for the crimes often committed in its name by mistaken or barbarous priests, so Hoche always refused to impute to the immortal principles of 1789, to the great ideas from which the Revolution had sprung, the crimes of the monsters who had so unworthily subverted them, and who disgraced them whilst invoking them. The Revolution had borne him when quite young in her powerful arms; she had done everything for him; she was his mother, and he on his side was always a grateful son; he would only remember her kindnesses, and, as a resigned victim, he refused to give her his curse when she was about to sacrifice him. He tried to impart to his young wife the firmness of his own heart. "Do not allow thyself to be cast down," he said to her; "be my worthy spouse by courage: thou owest this to my love, to thy family, to thy country; it is not she who is ungrateful." The probability of an approaching death affected neither his patriotism nor his republican virtue, but awakened the tenderest affections of his heart. He wrote to his wife: "Tell those of my friends who have remained faithful to me how precious their affection is to me; tell them, above all, that in the midst of my woes my love for my Republic does not belie itself, and that if my life be useful, I am quite ready to sacrifice it." In the memoir which he drew up, and in which he gave an account of his military operations on the Rhine, Hoche made a thorough investigation of his conscience; he examined himself; he sought to know in what particular he might have been guilty, and the motives of his arrest. "With the exception of the good pleasure of the committee," wrote he, "my memory cannot furnish me any other than my refusal to confer with the

deputies when I thought it was urgent to act. Is that insubordination? Whatever it may cost me, I shall remain convinced of the saying of Eujène, that every general who convokes a council of war has no desire to act. In presence of the opportunity which it was necessary to grasp, I never feared to engage my responsibility. I always thought that the most terrible one was to render an account some day to the Supreme Being for the human blood which might have been uselessly shed, and I must say that that and that alone has always made me shudder."

The thought of a just and merciful God sustained him : he hoped in His providence, in His kindness. He wrote to his brother-in-law : " A just God has protected me until now ; I rely altogether on Him ; the thought of a crime has never entered into my heart." And to his wife : " He who presides over everything will sustain my courage. . . . All our miseries will soon be at an end. It is in the bosom of the Eternal One that we shall meet again ; may His justice at least reunite us there." A new and poignant grief was yet reserved for him. A young man about twenty years of age, called Thoiras, an adjutant in the regiment of his brother-in-law and a friend of his family, had been arrested at Thionville, where Adelaide had remained near her captive father, lavishing on him her cares, whilst trembling for his life and that of her husband. Thoiras, in the eyes of the government, was suspected on account of his devotion to this unfortunate family, and guilty of open enthusiastic admiration for his general. He was sent to Paris, and confined with him in the same prison in the Conciergerie. Hoche found a bitter yet sweet pleasure in conversing with this young man of the objects so dear to his heart ; he wrote to his wife : " Thoiras has given me news of thee ; each one of his words filled my soul with emotion," and he hoped that his young friend would find protection from the fury of the tyrants on account of his age and the obscurity of his position.

Vain hope ! On the fourth day, in the morning, the door-keeper, the daily purveyor of the scaffold, entered the

prison and read aloud, according to his custom, the list of the prisoners summoned on that day before the revolutionary tribunal. Hoche heard the names of several with whom he was intimate, and he expected his turn, which did not come. The last name inscribed on the fatal list was that of Thoiras. Hoche grew pale on hearing this name, more, without doubt, than he would have done if he had heard his own, and he remained silent, his soul divided between sombre wrath and hopeless pity. Thoiras did not change countenance; he pulled out his watch, and giving it to Hoche, he begged of him to keep it for ever,* and asked in exchange a flower from a bouquet of roses which he held in his hand, and which he had received that very morning from a person who remained unknown. All the other prisoners called before the tribunal with Thoiras begged for one also; all were condemned, and ascended the steps of the scaffold wearing a rose in the button-hole. Thus they died in those days, with a careless firmness and a disdain for life energetically expressed by Hoche when, in a parting letter addressed to his wife, he said: "Death is no longer an evil when life has ceased to be a blessing."

It is said, however, that after the death of Thoiras, a notable change took place in the manners of Hoche in the Conciergerie, and in his language with his jailers¹ and his judges, and that to a cold indifference succeeded² an anger, a haughty rage, whose scornful and irritable expression he could no longer contain. What would he have thought had he known that a day would come when that frightful *régime*—which had swallowed up so many illustrious defenders of the Revolution and of the fatherland, which was about to

* The watch of Thoiras is to-day in the possession of the daughter of Hoche, the Countess of Roys, and it still marks the hour at which it stopped on the day when this young officer was torn from the arms of his general.

¹ *Gebliers*; *g* soft.

² *Succéda*. Note difference between *succéder* and *réussir*; *succéder*, to follow, to come in succession; *réussir*, to succeed in an undertaking.

strike him also, and which had sown for a century perhaps, in the heart of numberless families, hatred and horror for the Republic—would be extolled as having saved it. With what stupefaction, with what grief and indignation, his magnanimous soul would have been seized, if he had been told that such a doctrine would become a precedent and be popular in France. Ah! even as a noble and lovable victim who had preceded him in his cell, the brave¹ Madame Roland—who during the day collected her remaining strength to exhort her companions in misfortune, and who during the long hours of night wept bitterly in silence*—he also would have shed everflowing tears; he would have wept over the Republic; he would have despaired of a generation capable of opening its ears and its heart to such monstrous sophistry. †

¹ *Héros*; *h* aspirated, but silent in *héroïne* and *héroïque*.

* The woman who waited on her said to me one day: "In your presence she collects all her strength, but in her room she remains sometimes three hours weeping, leaning on her window."

† A patriot, the illustrious Daunou, a prisoner himself at this epoch, has given a frightful and faithful picture of the prisons during the Reign of Terror, and of the frightful lot to which the two hundred thousand prisoners of the Committee of Public Safety were reduced in France. "This committee," he said in conclusion, "once invested with supreme authority, slaughtered in the terrified city of Paris more than two thousand victims in four months. A mode of execution invented to lessen suffering, became in its dictatorial hands a means of rapid extermination; people were almost tempted to regret the old mode of torture, because it seemed that it would have been less *expeditious*. In the height of their fury, the murderous sword of the decemvirs descended alike upon all sexes, all fortunes, all opinions; they directed it by choice on all distinguished talent, on all energetic dispositions; they cut down as much as they could the flowers and hope of the nation. . . . I saw snatched from my side unfortunates who were called summarily before the tribunal, dragged three hours afterwards to meet their doom with *forty accomplices whom they had never seen*. Every prison was to provide a previously settled number of victims. Blood was at a premium, and it only sufficed for the judges to have the time, not to cross-question but to insult each one of the prescribed victims. . . . Let us say, however, that in this heartrending spectacle one thing at least consoled and ennobled humanity; that was, the

The hour of deliverance was at hand ; discord reigned among the terrorists. Robespierre, a few days after having, at the acme of his power, presided at the fête consecrated to the Supreme Being, had decreed through the terrified Convention, the prairial law, more sanguinary than all the others, suppressing as useless in most cases, before the revolutionary tribunal, all witnesses and defenders, holding the sword suspended over the entire Convention, and taking away from the latter the right to denounce or to protect its own members, the lives of whom were entirely at the mercy of the implacable Committees of Public and General Safety.* All then felt in a state of peril. Most of the members of the committees trembled before the much dreaded triumvirate of Robespierre, Couthon and Saint Just.† They understood that the latter, after having satiated their fury on their enemies in the Convention, would sacrifice them in their turn should they not be prevented, and they felt they must either kill them or perish. Collot d'Herbois, Billaud-Varennes, Barrère, Cambon, members of the Committee of Public Safety, leagued themselves with their colleagues of the Convention, those most in danger, Tallien, Amar, Bourdon de l'Oise, Lecointre, and many others. Tallien was the soul and the arm of this conspiracy, which ended by the

courage of the victims. Such injustice, such atrocity, called forth in all its brightness the inherent pride of man ; a magnanimous devotion assumed forms suitable to age, to sex and to character. Innocence perished with mild sensibility or with calm serenity, and virtue sank with pride in the abyss of carnage. M. Daunou never thought that such a frightful régime could ever have resulted in the preservation of the territory, or rendered any service whatever to the country. He was, on the contrary, deeply convinced that if this régime of blood had continued, the nation was hastening to utter ruin."—*TAILLANDIER, Biographical Document on Daunou.*

* On hearing the reading of this proposed law, a deputy named Ruamps dared to say aloud, "If this becomes law, all that remains for us to do is to blow out our brains."

† These formed, in the body of the Committee of Public Safety, a triumvirate which for a long time had arrogated all power to itself, and whence emanated in a direct manner the most atrocious resolutions.

defeat of the triumvirs and their most sanguinary acolytes on the memorable day of the 9th thermidor.

But before that day of freedom—the eve of it, in fact—the scaffold was in its usual appointed place and the knife was doing its work. Several members of the most illustrious families of France went to meet their doom, and together with them the two Trudaine, models of fraternal affection, and André Chénier, the immortal writer of “*La Jeune Captive*,” cut down in all the brilliancy of his genius, and his friend Roucher, author of the poem of the “*Mois*,” and who, at the point of death, sent his portrait to his children with these lines :

“Wonder not, my darlings, so precious to mine eyes,
At the sad air in the portrait which already feels your cries,
For when the master artist limned those features pale yet true,
I saw prepared the scaffold ; ’twas then I thought of you.”

Hoche saw them ascend the fatal cart ; already the storm of the thermidorean¹ re-action was at its height ; a few hours later they would have been saved, but they returned no more ; they were, in Paris, the last and the much lamented victims of this era of blood.

The next day a widely spread murmur, mingled with imprecations and cries of joy, resounded around the Conciergerie ; these cries announced the victory of the conspirators and the downfall of the tyrants. Soon the gates of the Conciergerie were opened. Robespierre, and with him Couthon, Saint Just and their chief adherents, entered, loaded with chains ; all were about to occupy those same cells which they had filled with innocent people. Saint Just, in the prison, met Hoche face to face ; the latter only avenged himself on his fallen enemy by silence.

The Montagnards, to save their own heads, had overthrown Robespierre ; they had arrested the course of the Reign of Terror for a moment, but they had not overthrown it, and they tried at first to support it against the

¹ 9th thermidor, year two—27th of July, 1794 ; date when Robespierre was arrested and beheaded on the following day. *Thermidor* ; heat, or summer.

uplifted wave of public horror. They could not succeed in this ; the prisons, however, only opened their doors at first to those among the prisoners whom the Convention ordered to be liberated, at the request, and in some manner on the responsibility, of the deputies. Hoche was of the number ; the deputy Lacoste, a witness of his exploits at Wissemburg, caused him to be set free. Hoche was liberated on the 17th thermidor, year two, poor, and in such destitution that he was unable to pay his fare or to take a conveyance to go and meet his wife at Thionville. His first care had been to write to his friend Lacoste and to his wife, two letters in which his grateful, passionate though stern character is well portrayed. He said to the first : " I cannot complain of my misfortunes since they have taught me to know what a friend I had in thee, thou, my liberator ! " He wrote to his wife : " I am free, let us thank Heaven for it ! I am going to meet you on foot, as becomes a Republican."

Twelve days later (29th thermidor) Hoche obtained a command : he was ordered to quell in the west the rebellion of the Chouans ; and the same Committee of Public Safety which three months before had unanimously declared Hoche to be a traitor to his country, gave him now a mission to defend it, and named him general-in-chief of the Army of the Coasts of Cherbourg.

SECOND PART.

I.

VENDEAN WAR.—CHOUANISM.

The insurrection of the Vendée had reached Anjou, Maine, and a great part of Brittany. These trackless, wooded regions, as yet foreign to arts and commerce, had preserved their old customs. In the districts which the nobility had not abandoned for the towns, the populations remained submissive to their lords and to their priests. Ancient loyalty had become deeply rooted with religious faith; and when they saw their priests interfered with in their rites and in their properties by the decrees of the Convention; the ancient order, both social and political, overturned; the massacres of September, the King dethroned and tortured; the clergy proscribed, the scaffold permanently erected in Paris, common horror united still more closely the aristocracy and the people. The Vendée was the first to rise and to produce heroes. Among its chiefs the plebeians and patricians were mixed confusedly. The most noted were the teamster Cathelineau, the gamekeeper Stofflet, the naval officer Charette, Bonchamps, Lescure, d'Elbée, the Prince of Talmont, and Henri de La Rochejaquelein, justly called the Achilles of La Vendée. They frequently defeated the regular troops and the battalions of the National Guard which marched against them. Everything gave way before the intrepid enthusiasm of the Vendean peasants. Without arms, they seized the artillery, rushing in on the cannons which mowed them down. It was thus that several republican generals were conquered in rotation. Masters of numerous places, the Vendéans

formed three corps of ten to twelve thousand men each ; the first, under Bonchamp, occupied the borders of the Loire, and received the name of the Army of Anjou ; the second, under d'Elbée, in the centre, was called the Grand Army ; the third formed the so-called Army of the Marshes, under the redoubtable Charette, who, by his audacity, his energy, his great activity, his indomitable perseverance, and by the astonishing fecundity of his resources and stratagems of war, was the greatest partisan chief which France ever saw.

A council of operations was established, and the chief command was given to Cathelineau, who perished at the attack of Nantes, after which the Vendéans, driven beyond the Loire, defeated in succession the republican Generals Biron, Rossignol and Canclaux. At last, seventeen thousand men of the old garrison of Mayence, reputed to be the *élite* of the army, were sent into La Vendée ; Kléber was in command. They were at first conquered by the Vendéans, but the latter experienced several defeats at Châtillon and at Chollet, and their principal chiefs, Lescure, Bonchamp and d'Elbée, received mortal wounds in these bloody contests.

The insurgents then communicated with England to receive some assistance from her. They wished to obtain possession of a port in the English Channel, and the great Vendean army, eighty thousand men strong, marched on Granville. Repelled before that place for want of artillery, put to rout at Mans, it was almost annihilated in trying to pass the Loire at Savenay. The Vendée was thus defeated for the first time in December, 1793. Its population, overwhelmed, decimated, and deprived of almost all its chiefs, killed in battle, seemed disposed to surrender, when a frightful system of extermination was introduced against it, and made it find new strength in its despair. The promoter of this system was the republican General Thurreau, who surrounded the Vendée with sixteen intrenched camps. By his orders twelve flying columns, known under the name of "infernial columns," scoured the

country in every direction, putting the land on all sides mercilessly to fire and sword, scattering everywhere devastation and death. They thus reanimated the insurrection, which was almost at an end; the exasperated inhabitants flew again to arms in 1794, and formed again two redoubtable armies under their last surviving chiefs, Charette and Stofflet.

The insurrection gained Brittany, which in its turn revolted. But the war in this country did not assume the same character as in the Vendée, where the parties had struggled in large masses, and where sanguinary battles had been fought. In Brittany the insurgents waged against the Republicans a party war, a war of surprises, of ambuscades, carrying away their posts, falling unawares on their detachments, and firing on them from behind the hedges, from under cover, and from ravines in which they were hidden. This war, generally called Chouanism, derived its name from a family of smugglers of salt, or salt sellers (*faux sauniers*), the chief of which was named Jean Cottureau. The latter, usually of a sad and taciturn disposition like the owl, the bird of night, had received for this reason the name of Chouan.¹ He was of rare intrepidity, cunning, energetic, indefatigable. He had haunted the woods fully armed, with his three sons, at the beginning of the great requisition² of 1792, and he was the first to give the signal of the war which two years later assumed a redoubtable character, and which carried desolation into Brittany, Anjou, Maine, and a part of Lower Normandy. A man gifted with great energy, and as intelligent as clever, the Count Joseph de Puisaye, had from its inception fomented the insurrection in Brittany. An old deputy of the nobility of the Perch in the Constituent Assembly, he first embraced with zeal the principles of the Revolution, and later, like many others,

¹ De Balzac says that this name was adopted by this party from the call which they used resembling the cry of the screech-owl.

² Demand for men or provisions made by authority. It comprised all young men from 18 to 25.

he had been re-enlisted to the royal cause through horror for the regicide and for the Reign of Terror. Few men have given evidence of more indefatigable activity, of as much elasticity of mind, of a purpose as persevering as firm, as fit to triumph over all obstacles ; he succeeded in establishing a most friendly intercourse with the Briton peasants, and in exercising a great ascendancy over the insurgent chiefs, the principal survivors of whom, after the great disasters of the Vendéans at Mans and at Savenay, were, as we have said before, Stofflet and Charette.

Puisaye, present everywhere, watching everything, was the true originator of Chouanism. He strongly advised the attacking of the outlying posts, the defeat of the republican detachments, the attack of the commissariat trains, and the seizing of the public treasury, creating at a number of points, with the assistance of the priests, means of resistance, and cleverly connecting all the plots of the insurrection. Arms and ammunition were wanting. Puisaye repaired to London in the autumn¹ of 1794 to obtain the assistance and the co-operation of the English Government, and he received at the same time extraordinary powers from Monsieur, Count of Provence, who, since the death of his brother, assumed the title of Regent of the Kingdom.* Puisaye kept up from London an active correspondence with the insurgent chiefs of La Vendée, of Brittany, and of Anjou, and he had in the country of insurgents as principal instruments, Desotteux, Baron of Cormatin, who took the title of Major-General of the Catholic Armies of the West. After the revolution of thermidor, three republican armies occupied the departments where the insurrection had arisen: the Army of the West, in Vendée, under General Canclaux, that of Brest, in Brittany, and the Army of the Coasts of Cherbourg, scattered in Maine and Lower Brittany. The latter was the one of which Hoche, in September, 1794, had

* This prince, younger brother of Louis XVI., was called to the throne in 1814, and reigned under the title of Louis XVIII.

¹ *Automne* is masculine and feminine; the masculine is preferred.

received command, and to which the Committee of Public Safety added later that of the Army of Brest. These armies together comprised no more than forty thousand men, forces quite inadequate to cover one hundred and fifty leagues of the coast, along an irregular country, divided by trackless ravines, bristling with forests, and the population of which, altogether hostile, was excited by religious passion and by an unquenchable hatred for the revolutionary cause, the latter being inseparable in its eyes from an execrable system of spoliation, of bloody tyranny and terror.

II.

HOCHÉ IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF THE WEST.—AMNESTY AND FIRST PEACEFUL MEASURES.

Hoche found his Army of the Coasts of Cherbourg in a state of thorough disorganization ; the soldiers, scattered in detachments in the cities and the large country towns, had lost the habit of discipline and drill ; they believed¹ they might do anything, lived by pillage, and scattered themselves in the revolted districts, much less to rally their inhabitants for the republican government than to abandon themselves to all excesses, and to perpetrate the most hateful exactions. Hoche understood that his first duty on the coasts of the ocean, as in the preceding year in the Vosges, was to reorganise the army, to awaken in it the sentiment of honour and duty, and with that view to keep the soldiers united around the flag, under the eyes and the hand of their chiefs. He withdrew them, with this end in view, from the cities and the hamlets where they were quartered, obliging the latter to watch over their own safety, and he established in the country districts a great number of intrenched camps, containing two or three hundred men, which he kept constantly at work. During the day he made them work at their intrenchments, and in the night he made them take sundry excursions to disperse all armed

¹ *Croire à* ; to believe in.

gatherings, to anticipate the surprises of the enemy, and to pacify the country. He himself gave the example, taking no rest, seeing to everything, often walking with his gun on his shoulder through the forests and fields like a simple grenadier, who might be at the head of the columns. He insisted on the most rigorous discipline in these excursions as well as in the camps, punishing marauding without mercy, ordering the inoffensive or submissive inhabitants to be well treated, sympathizing with their misery, and seeking by every means to impart the noble sentiments of his soul to that of his officers and of his soldiers. These sentiments may all be found in the proclamation which he issued on the 9th November, 1794; it sounds almost like the echo of the language of men of old: "At the call of the fatherland," said Hoche, "the free man runs to arms and hastens to defend its homes, without seeking to imitate the slave of tyranny, who is actuated by vile interest or by fear of chastisement. . . . The Republican, who knows no master, but who cherishes his duty, and whose severe discipline consists in an ardent love for his country, observes it everywhere; he protects the weak against the oppression of the strong, causes their properties to be rigidly respected, comforts the wretched, and loves them all. He avoids voluptuousness and drunkenness—they degrade the soul; he knows no other ornament than the preservation of his arms and of his accoutrements; he does not make a display of virtues, but they are dear to him, he puts them in practice; he is a conqueror, or he perishes honourably."

One feels in this manly and proud language the tone of truth; these are not conventional phrases adapted to the circumstance, and which one forgets after having uttered them; the voice of the general, of the citizen, and of the honest man—Hoche himself—is there. He exhorted still better by example than by words, and practised on all occasions this precept, of which he had made his device: *Res non verba*—"Actions, not words." In showing himself, when needed, indulgent and severe; always anxious for the maintenance of discipline; always attentive to the material

requirements of the armies, and still more to the sustaining and the raising of their moral tone ; always simple in his tastes and always dignified, he knew how to command more rapidly perhaps than any other general the enthusiastic respect and love of his soldiers, whose father he was ; and he said truly when he wrote with humour, at this epoch of his life : " The Army of La Moselle was a tall girl, whom I cherished like a mistress ; she is a darling child, which I am bringing up as an offering to my country."

Hoche in the west was in the midst of Chouanism ; and in that war of hedges and nocturnal surprises, waged by an enemy for the most part invisible, he breathed only with difficulty. In this field, so gloomy and so restricted for a man possessing such valour and such genius, powerfully as he controlled himself before others, he poured forth all his feelings in his intimate correspondence. In this he is seen to start with joy at the report of the successes of his old Army of Moselle, now the Army of Sambre and Meuse. " I wish it to be remembered," he wrote, " that I also served in this." On hearing of the great victory of Jourdan at Fleurus, he wrote with refreshing modesty : " If I did not fear to be importunate, I would address a few lines to Jourdan ; but what right has the scholar at this juncture to disturb the master ? Continue, brave and old friends, to sustain the reputation of your name ; when posterity will search in your correspondence, perhaps one of my letters by chance will bear witness to your friendship, and will bring me forth from the ruin of oblivion." However, he neglected no part of his duties in the rugged and restricted path in which he was condemned¹ to act ; he devoted himself to it entirely, and he displayed, in the instructions which he gave to his officers, the qualities of the vigilant captain and the talents of the statesman. " Only place," he says, " at the head of the columns men who are perfectly disciplined, able to show themselves as brave as moderate, and to be mediators as well as soldiers." He recommended them to acquire a per-

¹ *Condamne ; m* silent, as well as in *damner*.

fect knowledge of the ground, to confer with and to establish intimate relations with the peaceful peasants, to reassure them, to gain their affection by kind and sincere proceedings, whilst struggling against the stratagems and cunning of the Chouans. "Let us use," he says, "humanity, virtue, probity, force, and cunning if need be, yet ever preserving that dignity which is becoming to Republicans." He preached tolerance to his soldiers, and he applauded the decree of the Convention on the freedom of worship. Although very undecided himself in his religious principles, he respected religion; he did not share, in this respect, the indifference or the unbelief of his contemporaries. He felt deeply the happy effects of Christian convictions for guidance in life, for consolation in suffering; and in his friendly correspondence is seen how much he rose above the sad prejudices of his epoch.* Not only he ordered, through policy, that the priests should be tolerated in the wretched districts under his command, but he wished that the Republic should treat them as friends, and he saw no power able to be substituted for the action of the clergy, if it limited itself in employing it for the peace and the good of souls. He ordered, therefore, that the priests should not be molested nor the peasants disturbed in their belief, and that they should be assisted in their indigence. "Many have suffered," he wrote, "many are longing for a return to agricultural life. A little assistance must be given to such men to repair their farms." Thus we see that he knew how to mingle opportunely indulgence with severity, and show himself humane and just without relinquishing anything of his vigilance and of his firmness.

* Hoche thus portrays himself in one of his letters: "I shall always esteem a pious man. The moral of the Gospel is pure and sweet, and whoever carries it into practice cannot be a bad man. Far from me with all fanaticism but respect to religion; it comforts one in the troubles of life. I tolerate all beliefs; mine is not yet settled. For a long time I have searched for truth; a day will come, no doubt, when my reason, more enlightened, will make me adopt the inspirations of my conscience."—*Letter of Hoche, communicated by his family.*

So many efforts and such perseverance produced happy results. A new spirit animated the army; the populations ceased to have to complain of the soldiers of the Republic; a considerable portion of the inhabitants of this desolate country aspired to repose; the insurgent chiefs themselves ordered their subordinates to refrain from all violence, and, on the other hand, the National Convention, for whom this fratricidal war had become the most serious preoccupation, judged the moment opportune to grant a general pardon to the Vendéans and to the Chouans who had taken up arms against the government of the Republic; it promulgated accordingly a decree of amnesty in the last month of the year 1794, and about fifteen¹ deputies were sent on a mission in the departments of the west² with very extensive powers, to make sure of the execution of this decree and to pacify the country.

Success seemed at first to answer the hopes of the Convention; the insurgents, obeying the order of their chiefs, seemed to accept the amnesty in good faith, and many, without doubt, were sincere in accepting it. Hoche at first trusted to appearances, and thought the insurrection quelled. He gave himself to repose, and, taking advantage of his leisure moments to extend his knowledge, he sent for books, applied himself to the reading of the ancients, and resumed with vigour the study of Latin, the elements of which had been taught him in his childhood³ by an old priest. A soul tempered like his, brought up to worship the Republic and with a horror for tyranny, could not help being charmed by Tacitus; and he deemed himself happy to have succeeded, after many efforts, in interpreting this author without the assistance of translation.

His leisure moments were but of short duration. The

¹ The termination *aine* in such words as *dizaine*, *quinzaine*, *vingtaine*, implies about ten, fifteen or twenty. *Quinzaine* as a noun means fortnight.

² *Ouest*; *t* sounded also in *l'Est*, the east.

³ *Enfance* in this sense must not be translated infancy; infancy in French is usually translated by *bas-age*.

apparent calm around him was due principally to the fatigue of factions ; hatred was yet too keen, wounds too recent, and sufferings too great ; finally, the remembrance of the crimes of the revolutionary government yet kindled too much indignation and horror to make it possible to obtain a lasting peace. The greatest number of Vendean and Chouan chiefs only sought to gain time, watching the favourable opportunity and the early arrival of the assistance promised by the British Government.

III.

TREATIES OF LA JAUNAYE AND LA MABILAIS.—RENEWAL OF HOSTILITIES.

Among the chiefs who were actively and secretly preparing a new uprising, with the co-operation of England, the most influential, as also the most clever, was the Count Joseph de Puisaye, who from London, where he had been for six months, held in his hands all the threads¹ of the web woven² by him with the most indefatigable perseverance in Brittany, in Anjou, in Maine, and in Lower Normandy. He had succeeded in organizing in these provinces fifty divisions of a thousand men each ; all received the word of command from him, and only awaited the signal to recommence a mortal struggle.

Puisaye limited himself just then to forbidding³ the taking up of arms, or any untimely manifestation which might cause the Republicans to suspect before the time that an approaching uprising was at hand ; and more loyal than any other chiefs, he refused to lend his assistance to the negotiations of a treaty the clauses of which he might not feel disposed to observe, and to a delusive peace fit only

¹ Sons, *fil*s ; pronounce *fis*, s fully sounded. Threads, *fil*s ; pron. *fil*, l sounded.

² *Ourdie*, from *ourdir*.

³ Note second per. of Ind. pres. *vous interdisez*.

to excite the suspicion of the English Government, or to render its assistance less efficacious. Cormatin was less scrupulous. This man, by dint of intrigue, had succeeded in gaining a little importance; all means were good in his opinion to lull the vigilance of the Republicans, and he thought he could do nothing better than by treating with them. A subordinate in everything to Puisaye, and having acquired through him a certain amount of influence with the principal Vendean and Chouan chiefs, he succeeded in winning over the mind of Monsieur, Count of Provence, who held in his position, as Regent of the Kingdom, a little court at Verona, and corresponded in Paris with a royalist agency composed of a few trusty followers. Cormatin succeeded in fascinating the members of the *entourage* of the prince, and the most influential members of the royalist agency; he caused himself to be recognized by this agency as the major general of the Catholic armies, and obtained powers extensive, and independent of the authority of Puisaye. He then proclaimed himself aloud authorized to negotiate the terms of a serious peace with the republican government. He interviewed the generals, Canclaux and Hoche, and asked them for their permit to confer freely with the insurgent chiefs to bring about their submission. But Hoche, whose frank and upright character presented so many contrasts with that of Cormatin, did not listen to him without mistrust; he preserved in his relations with him a dignified and haughty reserve, and insisted that Cormatin should be escorted by one of the chief officers of the republican army in his intercourse with the insurgents. He appointed to this mission Humbert, a young general who had a bright future before him, and who, like himself, owed all his position to the Revolution, and one who united to an upright heart a keen and far-seeing mind.

Humbert soon formed suspicions of the sincerity of Cormatin, and imparted them to Hoche, who insisted that in treating with the Vendean insurgents, their disarming and the guarantee of a durable submission should be obtained. But the Convention and its numerous commissioners in the

west were anxious to see this wasting war brought to an end; they placed blind confidence in the pledges of Cormatin, and without yielding to all the demands of the insurgent chiefs, they neglected to be advised by prudence in treating with them. They granted, with the liberty of worship, indemnities for the devastations committed, the exemption of military service for the young men of the present requisition in order to populate the country districts anew, and the payment of the bonds signed by the chiefs to the amount of two millions. To these equitable conditions the deputies added a few others which Hoche, not without good cause, judged very dangerous. Not only did they leave the insurgents their arms, but they consented to their forming a territorial guard, not very large, it is true, but distributed¹ in the country districts in the very heart of the insurrection, under the command of the local authorities.

Such were the principal conditions of a first treaty which was signed on the 17th February, 1795, at the Château of La Jaunaye, near Nantes, by the representatives in the west, for the republican government on the one side, with Cormatin, Charette, Sapinaud and their officers acting in the name of the Vendean army. They submitted, recognized the laws of the Republic, and a few days afterwards Charette made with General Canclaux a formal entrance into the city of Nantes, where he had a magnificent reception extended to him as a hopeful and joyful pledge at the termination of a war so disastrous.

Two months later, in April, a second peace, a fictitious peace, was signed, through the agency of Cormatin, with the principal Chouan chiefs of Brittany, at La Mabilais, between Rennes and La Prévalaye, general quarters of the royalist army; it was founded on nearly the same conditions as the preceding treaty concluded for La Vendée at La Jaunaye. Stofflet, directed by the Abbé Bernier, was still struggling in Anjou. Seeing himself left sole commander, beaten by the Republicans, almost alone and with-

¹ *Repartir*, to set out again; *répartir*, to divide, is regular.

out resources, he surrendered in his turn to Saint-Florent, and the first amnesty of Brittany and of La Vendée might have been considered complete.

It had been brought about without the participation of Hoche, who did not believe it would last. Cormatin and the Chouan chiefs knew but too well his just suspicions, and fearing the piercing look of the young General of the Army of Brest, they had demanded that he should be excluded from the conference in which this deceitful peace had been prepared. The deputies paid no attention to his advice, and were, as we have seen, too rash in their transactions with the Chouan chiefs. Hoche had foreseen the ruinous consequences of their imprudent conduct. "You have made a treaty with a few, not with the masses," and in his notes are found, on the very day of the signing of the treaty of la Mabilais, the following lines, remarkably expressive of his forebodings: "During the conference of to-day I pointed out to Chérin two flocks of crows, flying in the air above la Mabilais. Soon they separated; one of them remained united, the other divided. My good old¹ comrades, would you not have discovered there a significant omen of what is to occur after this peace-making?" The situation of Hoche became then very painful. Peace, dictated in some manner by the insurgents and by Cormatin, deputy of the royalist agency in Brittany and in La Vendée, gave to the party wishing to continue the insurrection and the war an exaggerated trust in its own strength.

"There was not," wrote then the Adjutant-General Savary, "a single insurgent on both sides of the Loire who did not think but that he had treated the Republic very leniently."² Such presumption engendered contempt for the republican authorities and for the forces of the government, and serious excesses were committed in many places with that audacity which the certainty of impunity imparts.

¹ *Ancien* was applied also in those days to one of the sections of the Legislative body.

² *Faire grâce à*, to pardon; *donner le coup de grâce*, give the finishing stroke.

The numerous deputies in the west, most of them men of but little standing, weak and vain, only agreed on the one point, to attribute to themselves the merit of having delivered the Republic from an exterminating¹ scourge, and to palm themselves off as being the principal authors² of the peace. They were divided as to the plan of consolidating it; some saw the means of attaining this end by rigorous measures; others by new concessions. They acted accordingly and each from his own standpoint, giving contrary orders, and substituting everywhere their authority to that of the generals; disposing of the troops according to their fancy; incapable of organizing anything durable; equally powerless in contending with anarchy and in restraining the rebellion. Already on all sides complaints arose against the generals and the functionaries, unable³ to repress disorder and to prevent the violent and bold acts of a number of insurgents who, in spite of the peace, traversed the land in arms,* and often even penetrated into the large villages⁴ and into the towns, to abandon themselves to odious cruelty either on the municipal officers or on those men known to be attached to the Republic.

Hoche, whose energy was paralyzed by the deputies, who tied his hands and disposed of his soldiers, was nevertheless held accountable everywhere for the harm which he could not prevent; he saw himself on all sides a mark for unjust attacks, and denounced by the deputies to the Committee

* Under pretext of calming all minds still in a state of ferment, the chiefs ran through the parishes, pressing all men from sixteen to forty years of age into the service. The hour of mass was the appointed moment for these gatherings. The people went to church fully armed. Reviews took place, the men wearing white cockades and plumes, and shouting "Long live the King."

¹ *Exterminateur* : fem. *exterminatrice*.

² *Auteur* ; no fem., therefore, *une femme auteur* must be used.

³ *Hors* is used sometimes without the preposition *de* : *tout est perdu hors l'honneur*.

⁴ Littré says that *bourg* is pron. *bour*, *g* silent; the French Academy says *bourk*; in the plural the *s* is not carried; *bourgs étendus* is *bour étendus*.

of Public Safety as being guilty, when, on the contrary, he had so much against them of which to complain. The committee, judging of the situation from the erroneous reports of most of the deputies in the west, and lulled into a dangerous delusion as to the dispositions of all minds in Brittany and in La Vendée, joyfully received their complaints against Hoche, and addressed several despatches to him filled with remonstrances and bitter¹ reproaches. Deeply hurt and devoured with grief, Hoche replied nevertheless to the committee in a calm and dignified tone: "The position of a general whose army is scattered, in platoons of sixty, eighty or a hundred² men, over a space of four thousand square leagues, is not certainly an enviable one; it is all the more unenviable, though he redoubles every day his efforts to serve his country, to be accused of weakness and neglect by the very government to which he is devoted, whilst his enemies accuse him aloud of too much severity in his conduct. I have not feared until this day to tell the truth; you may be convinced of this by the enemies I have made; I might reply to the latter; but I shall not give to my fatherland the sight of a struggle, advantageous to me it is true, but scandalous for the Republic." This letter, to which the committee did not reply, caused Hoche some days of painful anxiety, the fact of which is revealed in his friendly correspondence with General Le Veneur, his old chief and friend: "I am weary of being thus badgered. . . I cannot remain any longer submissive to the caprice of events. Hear what reproaches are made to me. Is it for having spoken the truth? I shall always do so. Alas!³ one year ago I was thrust into the depth of a damp cell for its sake, but to no purpose. What matters it after all that men should do me justice, if my conscience reproaches me with nothing. Happy inhabitant of Morbihan, thou who

¹ *Amer*; the *r* is sounded in singular and plural.

² *Cent*, when multiplied by a number, takes the mark of the plural, but not if used for an ordinal number; the year twelve hundred, *l'an douze cent*, meaning here *centième*.

³ *Hélas*; *s* fully sounded.

livest only now to worship thy God, I envy thy lot ; why am I not in thy place !" Hoche heard then that General Jourdan, the conqueror of Fleurus, was, like himself, menaced with disgrace. At this he shuddered with indignation and grief. "What !" he says, "will intrigue always win the day ? Jourdan, the most worthy of our generals, Jourdan is misunderstood." At this news discouragement seized his soul ; he entertained the idea of handing in his resignation. He longed to live far from the intrigues, far from men, in a retreat near his wife. But soon he rose equal to the occasion ; he thought of his fatherland, and was himself again. "I owe my whole being to her," he wrote to his brother-in-law ; "ah ! would that I could serve her as I love her ! Ah ! whatever envy may do, it shall not overcome us. We have as our defence the remembrance of those great days in which our armies gained the victory. Our judges are the soldiers of Fleurus and of Wissemburg. Glory does not protect one from proscription, but it makes the outlaw immortal, and to ascend the steps of the scaffold is equivalent sometimes to ascending those of the Panthéon."²

Hoche was not deprived of his command, but he lost the generalship of the Coasts of Cherbourg, which was given to General Aubert du Bayet. He nominally only commanded the Army of Brest ; but his colleagues Du Bayet and Canclaux agreed in showing for his opinions a deference, the result of the intimate feeling which they both had for the merit of Hoche and for the superiority of his talents.

The situation of the republican armies in Brittany became very critical ; but whilst³ on one side the Chouans, in the anticipation of a new insurrection, agreed to seize

¹ Note that parts of the verb *aller* are often used as exclamations.

² *Panthéon* ; national monument where the remains of the illustrious dead were placed. The Church of St. Geneviève, in Paris, was called the Panthéon at the beginning of the Revolution. It bears this inscription : *Aux grands hommes, la patrie reconnaissante.*

³ *Tandis que* ; *pendant que*. These conj. are synonymous. *Tandis que* has almost the meaning of *tant que*.

the provisions, and to make it a very difficult matter to supply the troops of the government; on the other side the most severe orders forbade to the latter forced requisitions and pillage. Scarcity was felt; the Chouans took advantage of this to bribe the soldiers, who deserted in large numbers.

Hoche redoubled his efforts and his vigilance, whilst limiting himself strictly to his instructions; he was able, by the assistance of the priests, whom he treated with much consideration and kindness, to organize on all points a very active guard, and thus to prevent many disorders by the rapidity of his actions. He acquired, at the same time, every day the certainty of an approaching and general uprising. He nevertheless restrained his feelings; resolved not to give any hold to his adversaries, and to abstain, with regard to the Chouans, from any hostile act until he had in his power the irrefutable proof of their aggressive projects. He never lost sight of Cormatin, the indefatigable instrument of the royalist agency; he believed him as false as he was audacious, and he had, on more than one occasion, replied by contempt to his unbearable boasting. Cormatin, humiliated, avenged himself in denouncing Hoche to the deputies, whom he intimidated, and placed himself as an arbiter of peace and war. "I have to make but a sign," he said, "and all Brittany is mine, and in arms."

Hoche obtained at last the written and ardently wished for proof of the danger which he had foreseen, and of the flagrant conspiracy of several of the chiefs in rebellion against the Republic. A letter, addressed to the Baron of Solilhac and to two other Chouan chiefs, was intercepted; it bore as a signature the name of Cormatin and that of Bois-Hardi, who had acquired in the civil war a great reputation for valour and audacity. It revealed their ulterior projects, and announced the approaching resuming of hostilities against the Republic. No doubt was any longer possible. Hoche sent this letter to the Committee of Public Safety, and obtained from a few of the deputies the order

to arrest Cormatin and Bois-Hardi, by whom the letter was signed, as well as the three chiefs to whom it was addressed.

Instructed by Hoche, the committee prescribed to lead back the misguided men in the right path ; to protect the peaceful men, and to carry out the amnesty with regard to the royalist chiefs who had submitted in good faith ; but it ordered at the same time the merciless pursuit of the chiefs who might have violated it, and to disarm the communes. The committee gave at the same time to Hoche the necessary authority to act and to dispose alone of the troops placed under his command.

Cormatin and Solilhac were arrested ; Bois-Hardi and the two other chiefs who were compromised resisted, and perished bravely fighting for their lives. The Chouans saw that the Republic would no longer be satisfied with a mock peace. Thus warned, they resumed their arms and held themselves ready for battle ; the approaching arrival of an English squadron, bringing the assistance so long waited for, was announced, and already, on several points in Morbihan specially, parties had met and many bloody engagements had taken place.¹

At last, free to act and master of his movements, Hoche announced the resuming of hostilities to the army in his proclamation. " Brave comrades," he said, " your courage is no longer fettered ; you may henceforth fight against those of your enemies who have insulted your long forbearance and repelled the benefits of national clemency. . . . March with your accustomed valour on the gathering of rebels ; disperse them, disarm them, but spare blood, it has already flowed too freely. . . . A scrupulous observer of the acts of peace, I shall welcome with humanity and fraternity those who will submit in good faith. . . . I shall pursue the perjured ones without relaxation until they lay down their arms ; I shall especially attack the chiefs of the rebels ; they will be struck down without mercy."

¹ Note well that there is no agreement of the past part. here, *sic* the *s* is an indirect regimen.

This was the signal of a new war; flying columns went through the country in all directions, and rushed on the armed gatherings, which they dispersed; but others were rising everywhere, and in a few days Brittany was under arms; the Chouans flocked round the standard of their chiefs; they pressed on in large bodies towards the coasts of Morbihan; and soon the English squadron, bearing several regiments of refugees and powerful assistance in the shape of arms and ammunition, cast anchor opposite the Breton coast in the Bay of Quiberon.

IV.

QUIBERON.

The Count of Puisaye had at last persuaded the British Government to arm a formidable expedition to try and effect a landing, and to second the efforts of the Chouans on the coasts of Brittany. Several regiments of refugees from the Army of Condé, after the consecutive defeats of the coalition on the continent, had already passed, since the preceding campaign, into the service of England. The English Government formed five¹ regular corps of them and several staffs of other regiments, intended to be completed in Brittany with the assistance of the Chouans. The five corps formed were: 1st, the Regiment d'Hervilly, or Royal-Louis, the colonel of which was Count d'Hervilly, destined to a superior command; 2nd, the Marine Legion, commanded by Count Hector, late commodore, and almost entirely composed of refugee officers of the old royal navy; 3rd, the Legion of du Drenay, under the orders of the Marquis of that name; 4th, the Regiment of Loyal Emigrant or of La Châtre; 5th, and lastly, a regiment of artillery, commanded by M. de la Rotalie, and composed almost entirely of the officers and subaltern officers of that body which had defended Toulon against the Convention. The principal chiefs of this small army of about five thousand men were

¹ *Cinq*; *q* silent here.

the Counts of Puisaye, d'Hervilly, De Vauban, Dubois, Berthelot, and the Chevalier de Tinténia; the Bishop of Dol, with a number of missionary priests, accompanied the expedition. This first division of refugees wore the white cockade, in order to retain the national character of their enterprise. These regiments and these staffs were forwarded alone, and at first with rather important materials in arms and in ammunition.

This first convoy was to be promptly followed by another, carrying the residue of several other regiments of refugees assembled in Hanover, to be transported into Brittany. These troops, cruelly tried and decimated, were the remains of the regiments of Béon, of Rohan, of Périgord, and of Salm; they formed, under the command of the young Count of Sombreuil, a total of about fifteen hundred men. They sailed down the Elba, were transported on a British fleet to Portsmouth, and from there sent on to Quiberon. In short, when the two first expeditions had succeeded in landing, if Brittany rebelled, as Puisaye had said, and if he could take possession of an important position on the coast, a new expedition, formed of an English army, considerable materials, together with a French prince, the Count d'Artois, would at once put to sea.

The first fault was to have divided the enterprise into three expeditions without appointing them to act simultaneously; it was another error not to have placed the prince at the head of the first; a third fault, and one which had fatal consequences, to have divided the command between the Count of Puisaye, whose spirit of adventure and rashness was dreaded by the British Government, and the Count d'Hervilly, commander of the first regiment of refugees, a methodical man, strict¹ observer of the rules of the art of war, much more fit to command a regular army in battle than a body of volunteers in an invasion, where success often depends on the rapidity of the movements and the audacity of the attack.

¹ *Strict*; & fully sounded.

Puisaye insisted justly on landing whilst the coast was but feebly guarded, and in marching onward rapidly, annexing on its way all the armed bands of Chouans who were scattered over the country, and hastening to draft them into the service. He intended, in fact, to seize at once an important town on the coast, and there proclaim Louis XVII. in announcing the approaching arrival of a French prince. Thus conducted, the enterprise had real chances of success in the present state in which all minds were in France, and at the strongest period of thermidorian reaction against the terrorists and the Convention. But the prince, who could have rallied all the factions of the royalist party, did not appear; the quarrels among the chiefs, their long delays in landing, caused precious moments to be lost. At last the advice of Puisaye won the day. Commodore Warren decided on landing. It took place on the 27th June, 1795, in the Bay of Quiberon, formed on the one side by the coast of Brittany, on the other by a peninsula of about two leagues long, and the width of which varies without being more than three kilometres. This is the famous peninsula of Quiberon, joined to the coast of Brittany by a narrow strip of sand about a league in length, named *La Falaise*. Fort Penthièvre, occupied by seven hundred Republicans, and constructed in the centre of the peninsula, defended the approaches of the latter from the continent. The expedition landed at the end of the bay, at the village of Carnac. At the same moment bands of Chouans ran up, conducted by their chiefs, Dubois, d'Alègre, Mercier, and George Cadoudal; they routed on the coast several republican detachments, and reached the shore, numbering four or five thousand men; the peasants of the neighbourhood joined them at the cry of "Long live the King!" and Puisaye believed in the approaching insurrection of the whole of Brittany. But soon vexatious quarrels broke out between the Chouans and the refugees. The latter, who had served in the regular armies of the continent, received in their ranks with uneasiness and repugnance men without discipline, in rags,

deprived of all military instruction, much more fitted for guerillas than for service in bodies of chosen troops. The antipathy soon became reciprocal ; brawls arose from this ; it became necessary to keep them apart, and so lose in preparations, time which should have been employed in marching against the foe.

Orders arrived at last from London to confer on Puisaye alone the supreme command of the expedition. Puisaye immediately formed clever preparations ; ordered a dashing attack against Fort Penthièvre, which surrendered almost without opposition. Puisaye established himself there in a strong position, and by solid works in stone he connected the fortress with a rock sixty feet high, which formed a side of the peninsula on the west towards the open sea, so that it was entirely cut off, and every outlet was closed from one shore to the other. At the same time all the material of war brought by the English fleet was landed by his orders, and clothes and arms distributed to the Chouans. Ten thousand among them occupied the important line from Lorient to Auray. The intention of Puisaye was to take Brest, Lorient or St. Malo, where he had certain intelligences, and to march afterwards on Rennes. His emissaries went through Brittany with the rapidity of lightning, exciting the populations, stimulating their principal chiefs, Charette, Stofflet, Scépeaux, etc., and announcing to them the approaching arrival of a prince of the royal blood of France, together with an English army. A fortnight had passed since the first apparition of the squadron at Quiberon. Hoche hastened from Rennes with all the forces at his disposal, and showed himself superior to the perils of his situation. He had arrived at Auray with only five thousand men, and the generals of the Armies of Brest and of Cherbourg, hastening to answer his call on all sides from the republican detachments, were marching to join him. About the 6th of July,¹ ten or twelve thousand men having joined his headquarters, he thought himself

¹ *Juillet ; 11 liquid.*

strong enough to attack the Chouans, who, under the command of Vauban and of George Cadoudal, to the number of about ten thousand, occupied, facing the peninsula, the whole line between Saint-Michel, Carnal, and Sainte-Barbe. Hoche and Vauban had both of them understood the importance of the post of Sainte-Barbe, which kept the communications of the peninsula with the coast opened. It was to this point that all the efforts of Hoche were directed. Vauban on his side did his utmost to defend it, calling to his assistance the refugees of the regiment of d'Hervilly; the latter made an unfortunate charge, after which d'Hervilly ordered the retreat. A longer resistance was impossible. Vauban, to avoid seeing his army cut in two and driven back into the waves, caused his centre and his right to fall back behind the left, which still occupied Sainte-Barbe, which he abandoned afterwards to cover the retreat of the Chouans in the peninsula. They entered there with a multitude of women and children, and in the most frightful confusion, sorely pressed by the republican bayonets. They were all in danger of their lives, and were saved this time by the gun-boats of the English squadron which, standing broadside to La Falaise on both sides, sent a perfect hailstorm of cannon balls on the Republicans and arrested the pursuit. But already the refugees and the Chouans found themselves cut off in the peninsula. Hoche considered them his prisoners, and he established his headquarters at Sainte-Barbe.

Hoche, however, was himself in a very critical situation. Behind him and around him all the country was hostile to his army and to his cause; it was necessary to bring provisions from afar under escort; the arrival of the troops was slow, and the more his troops increased in numbers the greater were the difficulties of feeding them. The soldiers scattered again in the rural districts to live as best they could, and abandoned themselves to pillage and to all sorts of crime. Hoche, exasperated, ordered them back to their camp, which he forbade them to leave. Driven then by privations to murmur and to revolt, the soldiers mutinied;

Hoche hastened thither, and striding rapidly up to one of the ringleaders, he struck him down with his sword and thus quelled the sedition. He returned full of anxiety to Sainte-Barbe, into the barn where he had established his headquarters, and whence he observed with a field glass the movements of his own troops in the camp, when he received the visit of two deputies, Blad and Tallien, whom the National Convention sent to the spot with extraordinary powers; they were accompanied by Rouget de l'Isle, author of the celebrated hymn, "La Marseillaise," and who has left us a minute and faithful relation of the bloody episode of Quiberon. There he relates that first interview, in which Hoche, far from accusing his soldiers, vividly described their sufferings, and inspired in him at first the liveliest sympathy, founded on respect and admiration. "Whilst he spoke," said Rouget de l'Isle, "I could not refrain from admiring his imposing stature, his warlike air, although graceful and unostentatious; his mild and proud features, which were rendered still more striking by a large scar, which, without defacing them, completely crossed his forehead, ending near the right eyebrow. I admired his heroic simplicity, the pleasant harmony of his words and of his manners, of the sound of his voice with his expressions; everything in him revealed a superior man."

The two deputies employed, to give provisions to the army, the revolutionary means by which the Convention provided, successfully it is true, for present exigencies; but in doing so, they sowed in the hearts of the populations thus robbed and terrified the imperishable seeds of hatred and rage. The danger of the small republican army, isolated in the midst of exasperated populations, was increased by this; and, on the other hand, Hoche saw in front of him a numerous and very redoubtable enemy, occupying, in the small peninsula where it was confined, under protection of Fort Penthièvre and the English squadron, a very strong position, and one to all appearances impregnable.

Puisaye conceived a plan of attack which, had it been well carried out, would have been followed by disastrous

consequences for the republican army. He determined to send seven thousand Chouans, divided into two divisions, out of the peninsula, with the order to join the chiefs and the populations in a state of rebellion in the interior of the country, to fall together on the rear of the camp of Sainte-Barbe, whilst he attacked the front. Four thousand Chouans, commanded by the Count de Tinténiaç, with Mercier and Allègre under him, were sent, and landed on the 11th of July, in fishing smacks, at Sarzeau, near the mouth of the Vilaine. A second division of three thousand men, under two good chiefs, Jean-Jean and Lantivy, landed a little above Quimper. These two divisions were ordered to meet on the 14th July at Bard, in the rear of the Republicans, to make an attack simultaneously on the 16th, and to seize the camp of Sainte-Barbe by making a rear attack.

The royalist agency of Paris, always hostile to Puisaye, caused this cleverly laid plan to prove abortive. This agency, which would have liked to act independently of the English, and to secure without their assistance a position on the sea coast, after having failed in an attempt to carry St. Malo, was now thinking of taking possession of Saint Briec, and when it heard that Tinténiaç and Lantivy had landed safely with their divisions, these two chiefs were summoned by it, in the name of the King, to march on that place and to reduce it. They yielded with regret to that royal injunction, and two days later Tinténiaç was killed at the attack of the Château of Coëtlogon. Puisaye, ignorant of his fate, and confident in the execution of the orders which he had given, caused Vauban to embark with twelve hundred Chouans, and ordered him to make a false attack on the left of the Republicans at Carnac, in endeavouring to effect a junction on the rear of their camp with Tinténiaç. A single fusée was to be fired by Vauban if he succeeded in landing, and a second in case he should be repelled and not be able to keep his position on the shore. Vauban landed and fired his first fusée, but soon the enemy came in superior forces; Vauban, obliged to re-embark, fired his second fusée, but this was not perceived.

Puisaye was persuaded that he had succeeded in securing a position and in joining Tinténia. He was wrong in not making sure of this in a precise manner ; and he left the peninsula before daybreak with all his regular troops, advancing proudly in attacking columns to the number of five thousand men. The regiment of Loyal Emigrant was at the head ; on the right advanced the regiments of Royal Marine and of du Drenay, supported by six hundred Chouans, under the orders of the Duke of Lévis ; the regiment d'Hervilly, with a thousand Chouans, formed the left ; and the artillery, in which the Toulon artillerymen were incorporated, marched under Colonel Rotalie. The royal army thus advanced by way of La Falaise, on the camp of Sainte-Barbe.

Puisaye, hearing the firing of musketry at a distance, cried, "It is Tinténia !" and he rushed on the republican outposts, commanded by General Humbert ; the latter could not withstand this impetuous attack, and fell back on the camp.

Hoche, perfectly calm, waited for the Royalists in his intrenchments, which they attacked with fury. Uncovering their redoubtable batteries on their flank, he overwhelmed them under a perfect shower of grape shot, of shell and ball. The massacre was frightful. The most heroic efforts of the Royalists were powerless to contend with an army three times their number, commanded by a general as clever as he was indefatigable. Whole ranks fell, cut down by the fire ; most of the chiefs were killed or wounded. No one, however, recoiled ; and the survivors fought with unequalled desperation. However, the firing of musketry had ceased in the rear of the republican camp. It was evident that Tinténia and Lantivy were not at the appointed place, and that the small royalist army was alone engaged in the attack. Nothing like a conquest could be expected. Puisaye ordered the retreat. This was effected with great confusion, under a terrible fire. Hoche pursued the Royalists, and his cavalry spread itself over the plain to drive them into the sea before they could reach

Fort Penthièvre. As a crowning piece of misfortune, d'Hervilly, who was making the greatest effort, was struck fully in the breast by a musket shot,¹ which disabled him, and the whole army would have perished if Admiral Warren had not ordered his gun-boats to advance. The latter had received Vauban and his twelve hundred men, driven from the shore where they had first landed. They rushed on La Falaise, the entrance of which they protected; they thus covered the disastrous retreat of the royal army, and kept the Republicans at bay, whilst the boats opened a dreadful fire on them. They stopped, fell back in their turn, and re-entered the camp.

The losses of the refugees were enormous, and in the regiment of Royal Marine alone, out of seventy-four officers, fifty-three had been killed or put *hors de combat*; but at the same time reinforcements were arriving. The second division, that of Germany, formed of regiments in the service of England, had entered on the 16th of July in the roadstead of Quiberon at the very moment of the combat, but too late to take part in the action. Only the impetuous Sombreuil, who commanded it, had obtained from the admiral permission to land. He had fought as a volunteer, and it was he whom d'Hervilly, being mortally wounded, appointed to succeed him in command under the superior direction of Puisaye. It was this same Sombreuil who to the last struggled with Hoche for the possession of this remnant of blood-stained land, the grave of so many heroes.

To exterior gifts and graces were united, in the person of Sombreuil, chivalrous sentiments and great courage, the more exalted by the remembrance of a father and brother who had met their doom on the scaffold, and of a whole family fatally dragged into misery, exile, or the grave. He had quite recently married in London a young person whom he loved to distraction, and the very day of his wedding he

¹ *Biscaten* means musket and also ball; so called from Biscaye, where it was first used.

had torn himself away from his young bride to join the English squadron and sail towards Quiberon.

Sombreuil had recognized all the importance of Fort Penthièvre, which, flanked by intrenchments constructed by the refugees on the sea side, entirely cut off the peninsula from one shore to the other; on the preservation of that fort depended the salvation of the royal army. Sombreuil insisted that its keeping should be entrusted exclusively to his division; Puisaye refused, fearing to offend the refugees of the other divisions. But in all these were incorporated many republican prisoners, who, to escape the sufferings which they had endured or which awaited them on the English pontoons, had consented to enlist in the royalist armies, accepting their offers until the time when they could escape and betray their new companions. Already a large number, taking advantage of the low tide along the walls, had rushed through the water which covered the sands of La Falaise, and had joined the republican army, noticing on the right and on the left of Fort Penthièvre the fordable passages which led to the camp. Thus every night brought thither new deserters; one of them, David Goujon, offered to Hoche to head a column at high tide as far as the fort; Hoche accepted, and resolved to attack the peninsula without delay. The next day, 19th of July, he drew up a proclamation, remarkable among all others for its precision and its terrible energy. Fort Penthièvre was to be attacked on three sides at once, the following night at low tide; on the left, by General Humbert; on the extreme right by General Valletan and by the Adjutant-General Ménage, who, with three hundred picked men, was to attempt to scale the rock connected with the fort by the intrenchments of the refugees; Hoche, in person, was to direct the attack in the centre.

During the night of the 20th of July, the weather being cloudy, Hoche moved with his columns, marching at their head with the deputies, Blad and Tallien. His progress was arrested by a frightful storm of hail and frozen rain, which fell in torrents, whilst the relentless fury of the

winds wildly whirled the loose sand ; the soldiers could neither distinguish their way nor the voices of their chiefs, and stopped in frightful disorder. At last they resumed their march, and reached, after many efforts and without being perceived, the foot¹ of the ramparts, in the centre of the position ; there they stopped and awaited news of the attack on the left. The latter failed ; Humbert, arrested by the fury of the elements, was only able to reach the fortress at the dawn of day, at the moment when the central division was discovered by the besieged. The artillerymen of Toulon opened their fire on it, and gave the alert to an English gun-boat, which overwhelmed the division of Humbert with ball and shell. He was obliged to retreat. The day seemed lost ; the only chance of success depended now on the attack from the right, commanded by Ménage, and undertaken under the direction of the deserter, David. But immense difficulties presented themselves. The sea in its fury was beating against the fortified rock, to the foot of which David led the republican column. Protected by the fury of the waves and by darkness, Ménage and his troop scaled the rock, clinging to the brambles, to the shrubs, making *échelons* of their bayonets, which they thrust into the crevices. Assisting and pushing each other, they reached the summit ; the parapet remained to be crossed, and it required but the sentry's call to hurl them into the sea. But they heard friendly words ; David had accomplices in the fort, and the latter held out their hands to the Republicans, who rushed on the platform. The Royalists, who had believed themselves conquerors, were surprised and massacred ; the Toulon artillerymen, taken in the rear, were killed at their cannons ; all who resisted were slaughtered ; and Ménage planted the tricolour flag on the wall. Hoche perceived it and returned immediately ; he entered without resistance into the fortress, embraced Ménage, appointed him brigadier-general, and prepared everything to complete his victory. At the first report of

¹ *Pied ; d* silent.

the capture of the fort, Puisaye felt that all was lost. It was no longer a question of defending the peninsula against the ever increasing numbers of the republican troops, but of stopping them sufficiently long to permit the *débris* of the royalist army to embark. Sombreuil and he hastily, with this end in view, formed urgent and vain dispositions in the midst of frightful confusion. All the artillery was taken or destroyed; no intrenchments were formed in the interior of the peninsula, filled by a crowd of wounded men, and by a multitude of peasants, old men, women and children, all running in despair towards the shore, breaking and dragging with them the brave battalions who endeavoured to rally, and who had but their own persons to oppose to the violent discharge of musketry and cannons. At different points, rallied by Sombreuil, they succeeded in forming, and rushing on the Republicans with all the fury of despair, they made them recoil. Vain efforts! What could the heroic valour of three or four thousand men do against an enemy four times their number and intoxicated with victory. At every moment the Royalists lost ground and drew near the sea; but the tide was low, the English fleet was at anchor about a league from the shore, and the storm uplifted the waves and rendered the approach of the boats very difficult. The sky was dark, and the Admiral did not perceive the tricolour flag waving on the fortress; he was unaware of its capture. Puisaye sent in succession to the fleet an intrepid pilot and an aide-de-camp, the Marquis de la Jaille; then seeing everything in a desperate state, he embarked at Fort Haliguen in a light skiff, to hasten the arrival of help, and also, he said, to put in a place of safety his correspondence, which would have compromised all Brittany. Military honour demanded that he should remain to die with those he had drawn into peril, but his flight was wrongly considered as being a treasonable act.

Informed of the disaster, Admiral Warren put on all sail to reach the shore, and opened a terrible fire on the Republicans. A few shots, badly aimed, struck the crowd

of the fugitives and their defenders. The most frightful spectacle was then offered to the eye. The sea, agitated under a lowering sky, scattered the boats, towards which a multitude of both sexes and of every age stretched their hands, uttering cries of distress. Many even advanced into the sea, to appear no more, or fell tossed and broken down on the shore, to the noise of the firing of musketry and of the cannons of the squadron, which showered iron around them and on them.*

A small dismantled fort, Fort Neuf, otherwise called Fort St. Pierre, was at the southern¹ extremity of the peninsula, and at a quarter of a league from Fort Hali-guen; this was the last place of refuge of the royalist legions. This fort was undefended on the land side; about eight hundred refugees were assembled there, with their backs towards the sea; the shore on the right and on the left was deserted on account of the continuous fire from the gun-boats, which rendered all approach very dangerous; but in front of the refugees the republican grenadiers, with Hoche at their head, kept on advancing, crying "Down with your arms; surrender to us the patriots!" Several voices also cried, "Surrender; no harm will be done to you." At about three hundred paces they stopped, and Hoche advanced in front of his troops. Sombreuil came out of the fort to meet him and to capitulate; he said to Hoche that he offered his life as a sacrifice for his unfortunate companions, and asked that the latter should be treated as prisoners of war. But the laws were stringent, and, in the desperate state in which the refugees were, Hoche did not believe that he could accede to the request of Sombreuil. He admired his noble devotion, and answered that the conquered must trust to the mercy of the Convention. However, he pulled his watch from

* Unjust reproaches have been addressed concerning this to the English squadron. It was impossible, in the frightful mêlée, to avoid a certain number of Royalists being injured by the very balls intended to protect them.

¹ *Sud*: it sounded.

his pocket, and granted half an hour for the re-embarkment. Sombreuil returned to the fort, and, according to some versions, he induced his companions to believe that they would be treated as prisoners of war. But, according to a royalist writer who was present on this occasion and who heard the words of Sombreuil, the latter said to the refugees: "Half an hour is granted you to embark," and he ordered all arms to be laid down. A murmur arose, the men tremblingly obeyed, and every man laid his musket low by his side. Twice then the Count of Sombreuil urged his horse forward towards the point of the rocks in the direction of the English fleet, and twice he was flung back on the coast by the fury of the waves. The madness of despair was in his eyes, said the author of this account already mentioned; he sought death, and as he was about to dash forward a third time an officer held his horse; Sombreuil then alighted, and seemed resigned.

The English squadron, arrested by repeated signals, had ceased its firing; but before the boats had put to sea the half hour granted by Hoche had elapsed. Hoche withdrew; his army marched forward, surrounded the Royalists, and made them prisoners. It is said that several refugees pierced themselves with their own swords; others threw themselves into the waves to escape the fate which awaited them.

After these bitter combats came the judicial massacres. The eight hundred prisoners captured at Fort Neuf, joined to those of Fort Penthièvre, numbered about three thousand men, who were sent to Auray under the care of General Humbert and the deputy, Blad. Tallien repaired to Paris, where he made the most of the recent victory of the armies of the Republic, praising himself, and showing himself merciless towards the conquered. Hoche had interceded for them, and thought that he had moved the heart of Tallien in their favour;* but Tallien called national vengeance

* According to Rouget de l'Isle, Tallien had promised Hoche to intercede for the prisoners.

on their heads; he did more, he calumniated them; and before sacrificing his victims he tried to slander them, by accusing them of carrying poisoned weapons. The unfortunate prisoners, conducted to Auray, were huddled together in the churches and in the prisons of that small town; with them was the Bishop of Dol and all the priests who had, like himself, formed part of the expedition of Quiberon. The Chouans were afterwards separated from the refugees. The latter were subjected to a military commission, before which they placed themselves under the protection of a capitulation, the existence of which, however, they were unable to prove, having mistaken for a regular convention the words of clemency which had proceeded in the heat of battle from the republican ranks.*

Public feeling pronounced itself with energy in favour of this multitude of unfortunates, some in the flower of youth, others grown grey in battle, covered with wounds, mournful and proud, misled, without doubt, but all victims of their chivalrous loyalty, of their heroic devotion to their cause, and a great number of whom had been, under the preceding rule, the pride of the French navy. The deputy, Blad, did not perceive the indelible stain which the blood of so many brave men, coolly shed by the Government, would imprint on the whole Republic; the soldiers themselves, appointed to guard them, were moved with compassion; twice the Commission seemed to waver, and assembled again; Blad was inexorable, and the National Convention before its dissolution offered yet this holocaust to the demon of civil war.

The refugees belonging to the different regiments were conducted in succession, and by division, to the place of

* The question of knowing whether there had been a verbal capitulation or not has given rise to interminable controversies. The attentive study of facts, and the loyal disposition of Hoche, do not allow one to admit that he had consented to a capitulation. This question has been examined with impartiality in the biography of Hoche by M. Desprez; I have inserted a short extract of this amongst the vouchers. (See Note B.)

punishment. Those of the regiment of Béon were summoned first. "I saw them pass before me going to meet their doom," said a refugee who escaped from the massacre; "a drummer preceded them beating a march; then followed a squad of infantry; a number of peasants with spades on their shoulders closed this funeral procession. . . . The officers marched two and two; calm and resignation was depicted on their features, pride in their demeanour." They were all led to a field near the town of Auray. There they were shot; more than seven hundred of their companions shared the same fate, and the executions lasted several days.

The Count of Sombreuil had been transferred a few days before from Auray to Vannes with the Bishop of Dol, and the next day they were led to the place of execution. A republican general drew near Sombreuil and begged of him to allow his eyes to be bandaged. "No," replied Sombreuil, "I wish to look my enemy in the face to the last." Requested to kneel, he said: "I consent, but I wish you to observe, that I put one knee on the ground for my God and the other for my king." He died as a soldier and as a Christian. The Bishop of Dol perished after him, shot down with his priests.

Twenty years later, the remains of these brave fellows who died at Auray were collected with great care, and a funeral monument was erected to their memory in the very field where they had perished, and which even to-day is consecrated by popular sentiment under the name of the "Field of the Martyrs."

One shudders at the remembrance of such cruelties carried out in cold blood. Hoche himself had to suffer from the sentiment of general horror which was engendered by this dreadful sacrifice, which he desired to prevent though he was powerless to hinder it, and the responsibility of which belonged altogether to Tallien, to Blad, to the Committee of Public Safety, and to the Convention.

The royal cause received at Quiberon an irreparable check, but France received also, through the sacrifice of an

many victims, a lasting wound ; she gave afterwards a painful souvenir to the brave companions of d'Estaing, de Grasse and Suffren, so cruelly sacrificed at Auray, when she wished, after these fratricidal wars, to dispute the empire of the seas with the English ; and more than once, since that epoch in its naval disasters, it heard from the depth of the abyss which swallowed up its fleet this cry of vengeance : " Quiberon ! Quiberon ! "

V.

CONTINUATION AND END OF THE OPERATIONS OF HOCHÉ IN THE WEST.—PACIFYING OF BRITTANY AND LA VENDEE.

Charette had again taken up arms, and occupied a great portion of Lower Vendée and all the sea coast, when he heard of the disaster of the refugees at Quiberon, and the massacre of the survivors. At this last news rage seized his soul, and in retaliation he caused three hundred Republicans, whom he kept as prisoners, to be shot before him without mercy. He obtained, about the same time, marks of the greatest favour from the Prince, who was living at Verona, and whom the Royalists and foreign powers had recognized as king, under the name of Louis XVIII.* Charette received the red ribbon, the title of lieutenant-general, and the command-in-chief of the Catholic and royal armies. So many favours heaped on his person stimulated still more his indefatigable zeal, and he increased in energy to excite the country to rebellion to cope with the three republican Armies of the West, of Brest, and of Cherbourg, the generals of which went to Nantes to concoct a plan for future operations.

This conference had no serious result. Hoche was deeply excited at this, and in his report to the Committee of

* The young prince, named Louis XVII. since the 21st January, 1793, had died at the age of eight years, in consequence of the frightful treatment received in June, 1795. His claims to the throne passed to his uncle, Louis Stanislas Xavier, Count of Provence.

Public Safety, he announced the approaching landing of a new English expedition on the coast, and deplored the slowness with which the war was conducted. "Shall I always see," he said, "to the shame of our armies, our troops grow rusty in our camps? Is it the intention to wait for the rainy season to commence operations in Vendée? Can it not be seen that the rebels are seeking to gain time, and are awaiting the assistance promised them to act? Gods of my country, inflame all hearts. Grant, oh Liberty,¹ that all our soldiers may become heroes, and the independence of the fatherland will be preserved."

A few days after the forwarding of this report, Hoche was appointed to the command of the Army of the West in place of General Canclaux, and, in his first proclamation, he gave evidence of the great principles which had in all circumstances directed his conduct: Obedience to the Government; rigorous observance of discipline; inviolable respect for the laws of honour; compassion for the unfortunate; considerate attentions and protection to the peaceful inhabitants of the country districts; war without mercy against the guilty and the enemies of the country. Hoche obtained leave that his army, occupying then the very centre of the royalist insurrection, should be forty-four thousand men strong, and he took immediately the cleverest dispositions to prevent the landing of the expedition announced on all sides.

The danger indeed was imminent. The disaster of Quiberon had not discouraged the English Government. A new fleet sailed towards the coast of France about the end of September; it carried two thousand infantry, five hundred horse fully equipped, staffs of the regiments of refugees, arms, ammunitions, provisions for a numerous army, and finally the prince so long expected, the Count d'Artois, brother of Louis XVI., and who afterwards became King Charles X.

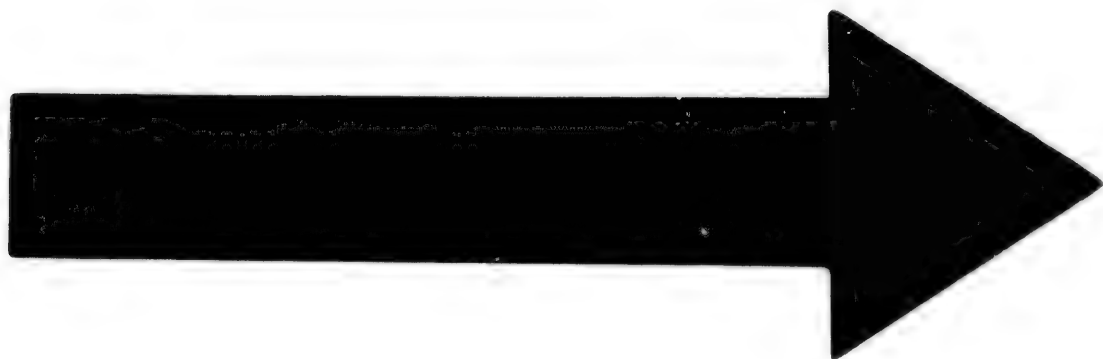
¹ Note that the second person singular is used in addressing the Deity, gods or goddesses.

The Prince landed at the beginning of the month of October, with a part of the troops of the expedition, in l'île Dieu, and he intended to land opposite Lower Vendée, where Charette, in possession of the coast, was to protect his landing. But Hoche baffled all the plans of this redoubtable chief; he defeated him in several encounters, obliged him to withdraw into the interior of the country, and made himself master of all the coast.

Landing was no longer practicable, and the high tide made it impossible for the fleet to remain any longer in these dangerous quarters. It was recalled. After a sojourn of six weeks on the sterile rock of l'île Dieu, the Count of Artois returned to England, and all the fruits of this grand expedition were lost.

The departure of the fleet threw the Royalists into the greatest consternation. Charette was deeply irritated at this. He saw all the republican forces now centred in Vendée; henceforth he was obliged to struggle almost alone and without hope, and he resolved to sell dearly to his adversaries both victory and his life.

Hoche, in spite of his successes, was again in a very difficult situation; all Lower Vendée, comprising the country between Sèvre Nantaise and the ocean, was morally gained over to the royal cause; the population had kept their arms, and although apparently peaceful, one victory would have sufficed to cause a general uprising. A clever chief, Sapinaud, had recommenced the struggle, and carried the town of Mortagne. Stofflet, jealous of the favours granted to Charette, had refused to answer his call, but he only waited for a favourable opportunity, and always directed by the Abbé Bernier, he exercised an absolute influence in Anjou and in Upper Vendée, where, surrounded by a court of officers and refugees, he was master of the country. Puisaye, on the other hand, had reappeared in Brittany, and called to his aid all the Chouan chiefs, organized the insurrection, and served, with the most indomitable energy, the cause of the princes who had not known either how to



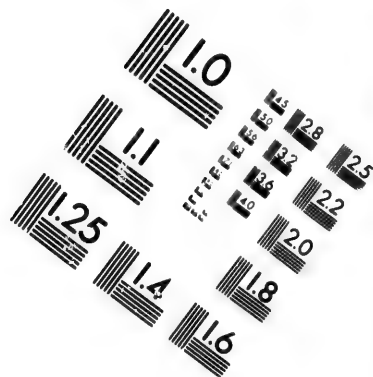
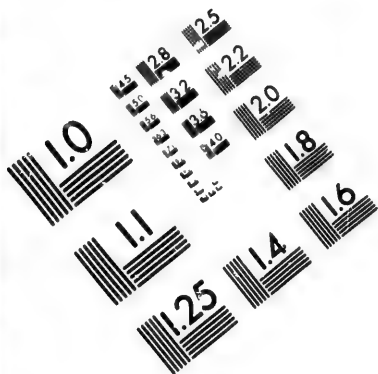
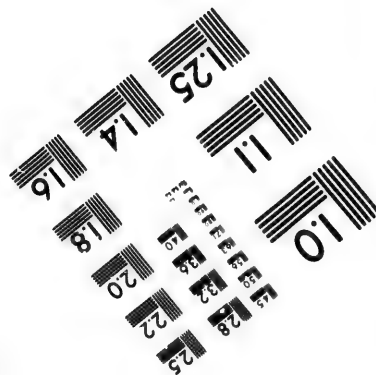
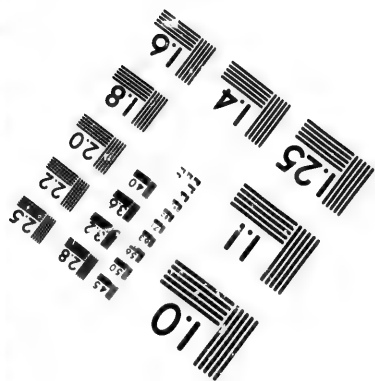
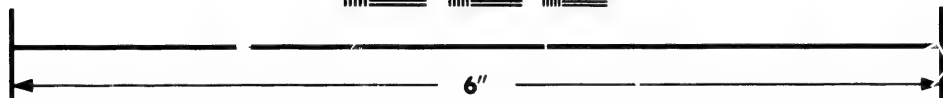
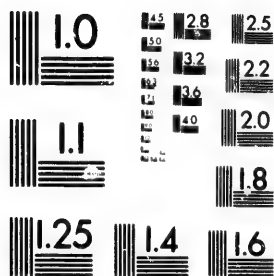


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appreciate his devotion or his talents. All the west, at the first signal, might be again in arms.

Threatened with so many perils, Hoche conceived a new plan. He saw very well that it was no longer by arms that an enemy which could not be reached anywhere was to be conquered. "The inhabitant of La Vendée," says the historian of the Revolution,¹ "was at once peasant and soldier. In the midst of the horrors of civil war, he had not ceased to till his fields and tend his cattle."² His gun was at hand, hidden under the ground or under straw. At the first signal of his chief he ran thither, attacked the Republicans, then disappeared through the woods, returned to his fields, hid his gun again, and the Republicans only found a peasant, without arms, in whom they could not recognize an enemy. Whilst the Vendéans had always had the means of living and obtaining recruits, the republican armies, which a ruined administration could no longer support, wanted everything, and were in the most frightful destitution. Hoche, without ruining the country, devised an ingenious plan to reduce it, by taking away part of its weapons and a part of its provisions for the use of the republican army." He formed a circular line from the Sèvre to the Loire, and one which by degrees would surround the whole country. This line was composed of posts passably fortified, connected by patrols, so that there was not a free space through which anything like a numerous enemy could pass. These posts were commanded to occupy every small town and every village, and to disarm all the inhabitants; they were to take possession of the cattle and the grain heaped up in the barns; they were also to arrest all the most noted inhabitants, and not restore the cattle, the grain, nor set at liberty the inhabitants taken as hostages, except when the peasants had voluntarily surrendered their arms. Recommendation was

¹ Thiers (*s* not sounded) was the author of "l'Histoire de la Révolution," and one of the presidents of the French Republic after the Franco-Prussian war.

² *Bestiaux*; *s* sounded.

made to demand a number of guns equivalent at least to the quarter of the male population. After having received the arms, the hostages, the cattle, the grain, were to be faithfully returned, with the exception¹ of a part deducted as a tax, and placed in the store rooms of the army. Hoche had recommended to the officers to treat the inhabitants with extreme gentleness, to fraternize with them, to use them well, to send them sometimes to his headquarters, and to make them a few presents. He had also ordered the priests to be treated with the utmost consideration. "The Vendéans," he said, "have but one true sentiment—affection for their priests. The latter only require protection and rest; grant them these two things, add even a few benefits, and the affection of the country will be restored to us." The line which Hoche called the disarming line was to surround Lower Vendée in a circle, advance little by little, and end by embracing it altogether. Whilst narrowing its circle, it left the country behind unarmed, reconciled, and protected it against the insurgent chiefs, who usually punished by devastation submission to the Republic and the rendition of arms. Two flying columns preceded it to fight against these chiefs, and to seize them if possible, and soon, by confining them into narrower space, they would inevitably capture them.

Hoche submitted his plan of peace-making to the Directory, which approved of it. Such was the name of the new executive power which had succeeded in France the bloody reign of the Convention and the Committee of Public Safety.* The Directors summoned Hoche to Paris to concert matters and to confer new powers on him.

* France had adopted at this epoch a new constitution, that of the year three. This constitution put an end to the existence of the National Convention; it vested the legislative power in two councils, that of the Cinq-Cents and that of the Anciens, and the executive power in a Directory composed of five regicides, named La Reveillère-Lepeaux, Barras, Rewbell, Le Tourneur, and Siéyès, soon replaced by Carnot. They commenced their functions (*fonction*; c sounded) on the 27th October, 1795 (4 brumaire, year four).

¹ *Sauf*; f sounded. *Sain et sauf*, safe and sound, in the feminine plural becomes *saines et sauvées*.

The thermidorian reaction was then in all its violence in Paris as well as in the principal towns; everywhere authority, supported by public sentiment, closed the clubs of the Jacobins and of the revolutionary societies, and saw again drawing-room receptions, where, alongside of illustrious generals, distinguished writers and politicians, who had contributed to the Revolution of thermidor or had welcomed it, were met already a few men belonging to the old aristocracy, and who, exiled under the Reign of Terror with their families, did not, however, show themselves hostile to the new rule. The drawing-room of the beautiful Madame Tallien (*née* Cabarus) was the most celebrated as well as the most frequented. Hoche appeared there, and was the object of general attention; his great services, his genius, his youth (he was scarcely twenty-eight), were so many titles to admiration, and he added also to this a noble air, a natural dignity observable in all his actions, and a noble simplicity in his manners. "The loyalty of Hoche," says his biographer already mentioned, "the sincerity of his devotion to the Republic, did not permit any one to fear for her sake this glorious arm, however powerful it might be. Never in his speech could one perceive those words which portray the general who might be inclined to tyranny on account of his popularity. He was not one of those men who dazzled, whose power is increased by enthusiasm, and whom the masses follow, seized with infatuation, into the arena where God has permitted them to astonish the world. Above all, and in the highest degree, he inspired confidence. A deep sentiment of honour and morality pervaded his conduct, rare exception in all times, and more particularly in those which followed the Reign of Terror. Every one felt that the cause of the Republic was safe in his hands. The Directory did honour to itself in understanding him, and did not show itself jealous of his glory; it approved of all the measures proposed by Hoche to pacify Brittany and La Vendée; it intrusted to him the three armies of the Coasts of Brest, of Cherbourg, and of the West, which formed but one, under the name of the Army of

the Sea Shore; and to this great military command it added the most extensive civil powers. Never had a man since 1789 had greater authority. Hoche received this testimony of such absolute confidence with modesty, and did not show himself intoxicated by it. His renown was without blemish; it was the highest and at the same time the purest of the epoch." Hoche at last was considered as the most glorious representative of the Republic, and her firmest supporter.

After the stay of a month in Paris, Hoche returned into the west to complete the execution of his new projects, by which a whole army was gradually to surround the revolted provinces and to disarm them. His vast plan of operation was to be put in force first in Vendée, then in Brittany; and it was for Hoche to determine the time when the submission of the rebellious country should permit the substitution of a constitutional and legal rule for a military one.

Hoche went first to Angers, and found that he had been very badly represented by General Willot, who had compromised everything in the absence of his chief. Want of discipline had again crept into the army; Charette had pierced through the disarming line and again showed himself redoubtable; other chiefs had retaken their arms, or threatened to do so. Everything changed on the arrival of Hoche, and to make sure of the execution of his plan of disarmament and pacification, he felt that the first thing to do was to overcome the surviving chiefs, and above all Charette and Stofflet. The latter, closely watched in Angers, and on the point of being reduced to weakness, had recommenced hostilities. Hoche did not give him time to rally his forces; the republican columns, setting out from different points, enveloped him on all sides, defeated him twice in succession, and followed him into the woods. Stofflet, betrayed it is said by a few of his own men, was delivered into the hands of the Republicans, conducted to Angers, tried before a court martial, and shot.

Hoche continued, however, his plan of general pacifying

with pertinacity, and endeavoured to punish or to prevent indiscriminately all excesses committed either by the Royalists, by his army, or by the patriots. He thus provoked the complaints of all those whose fury he restrained; he incurred their hatred, and saw himself again, in Vendée as in Brittany, denounced, accused by all the malcontents. Several times, overwhelmed by immense responsibility, driven to despair, and feeling himself disheartened, "I can brave cannon balls," he said, "but not intrigue," and he offered to resign his command. He showed on all occasions, by his example, that true love for liberty is inseparable from high morality and of perfect esteem of self. Poor, he carried scruple to the point when disinterestedness becomes a rare virtue. The historian of the Revolution said of him: "That young general, who loved pleasures, who was at the head of an army of one hundred thousand men, and who disposed of the revenue of several provinces, sometimes wanted necessary things. His pay, made in republican scrip, amounted almost to nothing. He needed horses, saddles, bridles, and he asked permission to take, paying for them, six saddles, six bridles, horse shoes, a few bottles of rum and a few sugar loaves, from the stores left at Quiberon by the English; admirable example of delicacy often given by our republican generals, and which every day was to become more rare. Hoche knew no more of power than its burden and responsibility; he longed for the delights of domestic life. The letters which he wrote at this epoch, a few months after the bloody scenes enacted at Quiberon, depict his uneasiness, his great preoccupation for his wife and the child which she was about to bear him. On reading them, one sees how well he knew how to drive away the grave anxieties of his vast command, to enter with solicitude into intimate details, and into the most minute cares of dawning paternity. This noble independence, this freedom of action which he loved, this dignity of character, all those precious blessings which he valued so highly, he desired his child to possess also. From the cradle everything must tend to this end. "I do not wish

my child to have any swaddling clothes ; let it not be confined in these as in a vice. . . . No leading strings, no padded cap ; let it crawl on its hands and feet—on a blanket in a room in winter, in the garden in summer. . . . Speak to it sensibly from the very first ; let it respect and obey you without fearing you ; let it love you because you are its mother and not for the sake of bonbons ; let it, above all things, never know that there are certain beings who beat their children ; mine must never be humiliated.’”

A few days afterwards it is to his wife that he gives intelligent advice for herself ; he thinks of completing her education, as later he will endeavour to complete the education of his unborn child. He directs her readings, he teaches her how to fix her attention and her thoughts on what she reads, and the familiarity of the language adds to its precision. “You must not,” he says, “be like a parrot, which repeats without understanding ; read little and analyse a great deal ; say many things in a few words. You see I treat you as a friend ; I believe I have the right to do so ; certain that I am the author whose precepts you remember most willingly.” His affection is later poured forth with effusion, and humour is mingled in his writings with more than the serious gravity of a man who has met with reverses in glory, and found thorns under his laurels. “You will soon be a mother,” he writes ; “how sweet it will be for me to embrace the mother and the child ! What caresses I shall lavish on both ! Who knows better how to love than myself ? Although I have a melancholy appearance and expression, is there a more feeling heart than mine ? No. Doubtless long misfortunes and great losses may have given to my face, to my conversation, a mournful and pensive tone, but I shall again find happiness in your arms ! I shall also find my gaiety again, that gaiety which has been lost for so many years.” His task indeed was a sad one ; he shuddered at the reports of the combats on the distant frontiers fought by his companions in arms, his glorious competitors ; he envied their victories won over foreigners on the Rhine or on the Alps, whilst he was struggling

against the French on the bloody soil of the fatherland. He sympathized deeply with the misfortunes of the conquered, but he did not any the less pursue his ungrateful task with as much constancy as vigour.

Of all the famous chiefs who had acquired a great name in Vendée there only remained one, the most skilful as the most indomitable. Charette still struggled, and, although only followed by a few hundred men, the prestige which he exercised over all minds was immense, and Hoche understood that the country would never be at peace as long as Charette was above ground. He caused him to be tracked by all his columns, and principally entrusted the care of his pursuit to the Adjutant-General, Travot. The latter gave no repose nor truce to his troops, pursuing Charette as though he were a deer. Every time that he was on the point of seizing him, Charette escaped, refusing all the conditions which might have saved his life, preferring death to exile, severe towards himself, terrible to his enemies, cruel towards traitors, pitiless for those who spoke of peace and submission. He was at last drawn into an ambuscade; the supreme struggle lasted several hours, and Charette fell exhausted. A German then acted nobly; he put on the hat of his general and was killed in his stead, whilst one of his men carried away Charette on his back through the woods, and concealed him under briers at the entrance of the coppice of la Chabotterie. A deserter betrayed him that he might be pardoned, and delivered him into the hands of the Republicans. Travot ran up, and it was to him that Charette gave up his sword. Travot treated his prisoner with the respect due to courage and to misfortune. They entered the town of Angers side by side, talking familiarly whilst passing through the crowds which had come to meet them. A handkerchief, soiled with blood, covered the forehead of Charette. Never had his countenance been more proud nor his look more defiant. Transferred to Nantes, he was judged there and condemned to die. The military authorities, in spite of the formal orders of Hoche, allowed Charette to be insulted with impunity in that very town

where the preceding year he had made almost a triumphant entry. The officer of the escort entrusted to conduct him to the place of execution, made him pass designedly under the windows of the house where his family had taken refuge. His sister appeared at the window. Charette stopped, raised his eyes, and encouraged her with a look and with a gesture.* Having reached the fatal place, intrepid and calm when facing death, he remained standing, gave the word of command for firing, and gently sank on his knees. His loss threw the Royalists into a state of consternation, and filled the Republicans with joy. The Government ordered public rejoicings: Hoche did more; and rendered the most brilliant homage to the valour of this famed chief by ordering, on the very day that he heard of his execution, that the state of siege in the whole of Vendée should be raised.

- Hoche afterwards passed with his army into Brittany, and surrounded that province with a long line of troops, from the Loire as far as Granville. The Chouans were then unable to struggle against so powerful a surrounding; they nevertheless opposed an obstinate resistance to it, and allowed themselves to be nearly driven into the sea before they submitted. The province of Morbihan at last gave up its arms; Sapinaud had already given up his; all the royalist divisions followed this example in succession; Frotté entered into negotiations in Lower Normandy, and was transported with his troops into England. Puisaye, seeing himself alone and on the point of being arrested, embarked for Jersey. Hoche, master of the country, distributed his hundred thousand men in a number of small divisions to watch it, and to surround it with, as it were, a wall of bayonets,¹ and he thus achieved its submission.

He had now to govern it and to maintain peace in it. He bestowed on these cares a few months of gentle, skilful,

* Informed of the fact, Hoche dismissed this officer from the ranks as unworthy of his position.

¹ *Réseau* literally means *net*.

equitable government, as free from weakness as it was from violence, and, whilst fanatics of all parties denounced his administration as provoking and oppressive, he everywhere raised the siege, abdicated the extraordinary powers with which he was invested, and voluntarily resigned the dictatorship. He brought under the yoke of legal order the Royalists as well as the Republicans, and re-established the authority of laws in the unfortunate districts where the sword alone had been supreme for four years. He could not succeed in this without meeting on both sides with a great resistance, from which he had to suffer most bitterly, and for the fifth time he offered his resignation, which the Directory refused to accept by granting him renewed marks of its confidence and of its esteem. Hoche gained courage, and continued his work, without ceasing to look lovingly towards his home and to sigh after family joys. A child was born to him. Hoche was the father of a daughter whom he named Jenny, and over whom he watched from a distance with impassioned solicitude; he insisted on her being nursed by her mother, and at the height of his last struggle in Vendée, the day before the capture of Charette, he wrote to his wife: "How affecting must be the sight of my Adelaide caressing and nursing our child, my Jenny! This is wanting to my happiness; shall I not soon enjoy it?" Other letters written during his peaceful administration show him to us so profoundly convinced of the necessity of causing the law to be respected, that he wishes his wife to be imbued with his principles as well as himself. "Be always a good Republican," he writes to her, "not in talking about politics, but in not allowing anyone in your home or in your presence to abase constitutional laws, and also by the practice of virtues." He could not comprehend liberty without high morality—a republic without strong and manly minds. "Yours," he says to his wife, "must grow in vigour, and your husband must have imparted to you that portion of energy which becomes you." Hoche acted as he spoke: always firm and dignified. Just before anything else, preferring to conquer hearts by kindnesses

rather than by violence, he commanded, under penalty of the most severe punishment, the respect of property and person, and at the same time he re-established religious worship in all places submitted to his authority. Before the time of Bonaparte he proclaimed religious tolerance and reopened the churches. So many intelligent cares, so much activity, prudence and probity, bore their fruits, and succeeded in gaining for General Hoche the esteem and the confidence of the populations of the west; his loyal word was respected as a living law, and the inhabitants preferred a simple promise from him to every engagement contracted with the Government; the priests, above all, showed themselves grateful, and were devoted to him. "God himself," wrote one of them, "satisfied with what you have done for the support of His religion, for the preservation of His ministers, who are your brethren, will listen favourably to the prayers which we do not cease to offer Him for you, and He will load you with His blessings."

Hoche effected the work of reconciliation in the departments of the west with the Republic; he pacified Brittany and Vendée, which was his most noble work. Not having been able to conquer him by arms, the royalist party tried to bribe him. Before applying to Bonaparte, it recalled to Hoche the part of Monk in England, and caused the sword of High Constable to shine before his eyes. Hoche rejected it nobly, without disdain and without boasting. Faithful to the Republic, and rejecting the advances of her most ardent adversaries, he, on the other hand, informed the Directory of their intrigues in a persuasive and respectful style, very different from the threatening tone which later the hero of brumaire¹ assumed with this same government. Pleading in favour of a few patriots, and pointing out the dangers of thermidorian reaction, Hoche wrote to the Minister: "Why violate the law and judge by courts-martial a few unfortunate enthusiasts? They have banished me; I cannot be accused of partiality in their favour, but

¹ On the 18th brumaire Bonaparte overthrew the Republic.

I speak for the sake of principle . . . it is time. Mistrust those who with elegant and polished manners deceive you as to the situation of the Republic, and who point out the patriots to the daggers of the assassins, describing them as terrorists. . . . As l'Hôpital¹ and Sully,² anxious for the public good, dared to tell the truth to their king, to their master, without doubt you will pardon a republican soldier for having imitated these great men in their simplicity."

Hoche now was at the height of his glory and of his fortune; the Directory recognized the services which he had rendered, and awarded him that recompense, the most coveted at this epoch, when luxury, inseparable from invasions and conquests, had not affected the customs of our armies, and when the generals yet preserved something of the simplicity of former days; it decreed that Hoche should receive as a national recompense two magnificent chargers and a pair of pistols, as a mark of honour; and issued a proclamation saying that the Army of the Sea Shore and its chief had merited much from the country.

VI.

THE IRISH EXPEDITION.

The peace of Brittany and of Vendée took from England the hope of triumphing over the Republic by means of the support of the provinces of the west. This power, on the contrary, saw fifty thousand men who could be utilized henceforward in some redoubtable enterprise against itself; and Hoche had, since the epoch of his brilliant defence of Dunkirk, conceived the idea of effecting a landing on the coasts of England or Ireland. The moment for carrying this great project into execution seemed to have

¹ Michel de l'Hôpital, Chancellor of the kingdom in the reign of Francis II.

² Sully, minister of Henry IV.

come, and it was in Ireland that he wished to strike a first blow against British rule.

Ireland, then oppressed, was the focus of permanent insurrections, and the Association of Defenders, or United Irishmen, prepared a general uprising against England. This association, supported on the one side by the sympathy of all the Catholic population, and on the other by a French army, could accomplish its end, which was to separate Ireland from England. She called the French to her aid, and promised to the projected expedition of Hoche great chances of success.

France covered then its frontiers with young republics, and Bonaparte captivated all imaginations by his marvellous exploits in Italy. Hoche, detained by the painful cares of the pacifying of the west, had followed with his ardent soul the conqueror of Arcole through all his victories. "Great youth," he cried, striking his brow, "how much I envy thee!" He was yearning to achieve things as great, and to find a field of glory worthy of his genius; he then projected the revolution of Ireland, and its transformation into a republic. His plan was then to pass into England, and to strike her to the heart. He caused his project to be adopted by the Government, which, after having concerted a plan with the revolutionary Irish chiefs, prepared at Brest a great expedition, of which Hoche had command.

In consequence of the treaty of Saint Ildephonse, which established with Spain an offensive and defensive alliance, the Spanish navy united to the French navy was in a position to dispute with the English the empire of the seas; but the naval forces of France and Spain were scattered over the ocean; to bring them together would require a considerable time, and the impatient ardour of Hoche would not brook much delay. He redoubled in activity, and powerfully seconded by the Minister of Marine, Truguet, he hastened to fill up the great vacancies which had taken place in the staffs of the fleet of Brest through emigration and the disaster of Quiberon, and he succeeded quickly in placing the fleet on a formidable footing. The expedition

was to consist of several divisions of the Army of the Sea Shore, which were made available by the peace of Brittany and La Vendée, and which were sent to Brest; to this Hoche joined two legions, which he named Legions of the Franks; the first was composed of officers and soldiers who were the most venturesome, bold, in fact, even to rashness; the other he formed, it must be acknowledged, of unworthy elements, and this, we regret to say, is a stigma on his memory. Hating England, sharing popular prejudice, and considering, on account of the hate which he entertained for the British Government, the British people as the tool of perfidious ministers and of a detested aristocracy, all means seemed permissible to him to humble and harass that proud nation; he acted in consequence, and introduced into that second legion all the abandoned wretches, the bandits and murderers he could get together, and placed it under the command of a foreign chief known for his savage energy.* This legion was to land in England to deceive the enemy as to the true destination of the fleet carrying the main corps of the expedition; its order was to land at the mouth of the Severn, to go by night to Bristol, to fire that town and to sow devastation in the surrounding country; then to re-embark, to land several detachments on different parts of the coast, carrying everywhere death, ravage and fire, thus calling on itself and keeping in England a considerable portion of the British forces, whilst the expedition should sail towards the Irish coast. The Directory had sent to Hoche full powers to direct at his will the expedition which he prepared with so much ardour, and already twenty

* The first thought of the forming of this infernal legion is attributed to the Republican General, Labarrolière, who made it the subject of a note which Carnot used later in directions drawn up by him for the establishment of Chouanism in England. A few extracts from this will be found at the end of this volume, Note D. Hoche saw this, and was wrong in using it in the forming of his Second Legion of the Franks, and in the instructions which he gave to it.

For more ample information on this subject see an interesting work by M. le Général, Marquis de Grouchy, published under the following title: "General Grouchy and Ireland in 1796."

thousand troops were assembled at Brest, ready to embark in November, 1796. But the state of the navy was far from efficient; the devotion and the activity of the new chief, given to the fleet at Brest, had not yet been able to furnish all it needed. The supplies were not ready; the numerous vacancies which emigration and its disastrous consequences had made in the ranks of the officers* were badly filled, many new officers were wanting in experience, and had to contend on board their ships with the want of discipline and insubordination, and this state of things incessantly created new obstacles. Hoche, irritated at so much delay, learned that Ireland was in open rebellion; he heard that the insurgents had expelled from the island ten thousand English sent to quell the insurrection. His blood boiled: he did not think of danger; he had promised to succour the Irish defenders; he would not wait for the fleet; he would start alone, and he wrote to the Directory: "I have pledged my word that I would go to the assistance of that brave nation, and I mean to keep it. Permit me to start with one frigate; you will send me this winter whatever help you may judge requisite. I ask for one frigate because the fleet is not ready to start, and because, whilst a generous and trusting people are breaking their fetters, the most disagreeable scenes are enacted here. . . . The Generals Villaret and Morard de Galles have promised to second me; I rely on their word."

The Directory did not grant the permission craved by the young and ardent general. A month passed by, after which Hoche, losing all patience, gave way to discouragement, and wrote to the Minister of War: "After many labours, I see myself obliged to give up my enterprise; our wretched navy can and will do nothing. I offer to the Government the sixteen thousand men I had reserved for the expedition;

*At the time of a first visit that Hoche and the Admiral Villaret made to the harbour of Brest, where several disabled ships were lying, Hoche inquired what had become of the officers who had commanded them so gloriously. Villaret replied: "Lost for France; dead at Quiberon!"

to wait any longer would be exposing them to perish of hunger and misery ; grant permission, I pray you, that I may not leave them. I will lead them where required as their general of division, and whoever may be the man under whom I am placed, be convinced that I shall fulfil my duty."

The Directors to whom this letter was submitted received it better than the first. They had little confidence in the success of the expedition, although they had given to Hoche every power to act. Struggling with the Legislative Assemblies, they were meditating a *coup-d'état* to strengthen their wavering authority, and already they had chosen among themselves Hoche as being the most suitable man to second their views, daring to reckon on his absolute devotion to the republican cause, and on the attachment of the army for his person. They saw him then with certain satisfaction give up of his own accord a difficult enterprise which, to all appearances, would keep him away at the time when they foresaw that they might need his services ; and after having hesitated ten days, they decided that the expedition should not take place, and called Hoche to Paris. It was too late ; when the order of the Directory had reached Brest Hoche had thought better of the matter ; confidence had returned to him ; his fiery disposition had carried everything before it ; the fleet had got under weigh two days before, and was sailing towards Ireland.

The army of this expedition was about fifteen thousand men strong. The vanguard was under the orders of General Lemoine ; Grouchy, the oldest of the generals of division, commanded the battle corps, and General Hurty the rearguard, or the reserve. The fleet comprised seventeen vessels, thirteen frigates, and thirteen inferior ships ; in all, forty-three sails. Morard de Galles was the Commander-in-Chief, having under his orders Major-General Brueix, and the three Rear-Admirals, Richery, Bouvet and Nielly.

The Bay of Bantry, in Ireland, was the rallying point given to all the captains under sealed orders, which were only to be opened at sea, and the orders of the day of the

General-in-Chief contained detailed and precise instructions to effect an immediate landing. Hoche and the Admiral Morard de Galles were together on a very light frigate, *La Fraternité*, in order to be able¹ to repair, at a moment's notice, to all points where their presence might be needed. The order to weigh anchor was given on the night of the 15th and 16th December, during cloudy and favourable weather. On leaving the port four vessels collided and caused some damage; the fleet was delayed and obliged to cast anchor that very night in the exterior roadstead, called Camaret. The following night it weighed anchor again, and its departure was marked by a first and terrible disaster: the ship *Séduisant*, of 74 cannons, struck a rock² in the darkness in the passage du Raz, and sank. Out of the thirteen hundred men who manned her, forty-five only were saved and picked up on the coast. The other ships succeeded in gaining the open sea without meeting the English cruisers. The seals were broken, and all the fleet sailed towards the Bay of Bantry, in Ireland.

But then, as on all occasions when, since the epoch of the Norman Conquest, a foreign invasion had threatened England, her happy destiny averted the peril. Never has this fact been more striking than under the Revolution and the Empire;* and if one reflects ever so little, reason is confounded before the numberless obstacles, altogether independent of the will and the genius of man, which at different epochs and for eight centuries have come between England and her enemies. Perhaps, then, we may be allowed to ask whether it did not form part of the mysterious designs of that Providence which rules human destinies that liberty, founded on the respect of right and

* I know nothing more conclusive in this respect than the narration given by M. Thiers, of the causes, as numerous as extraordinary, which checked the famous expedition projected at Boulogne.

¹ *Être en mesure de*, and its synonym *être à même de*, are both equivalent to *pouvoir*.

² *Donner sur* has also the meaning of to look on; *Cette porte donne sur le jardin*.

legal order, should have in Europe an inviolable abode. Scarcely had this formidable fleet reached as far north as Ushant Island than a tempest arose and dispersed all the ships. The third day the wind fell and the greatest part of the fleet was rallied by Rear-Admiral Bouvet, and directed towards the point designated for the landing, opposite the coast of Ireland (County of Cork), and at the entrance of the Bay of Bantry. Nine ships were missing, and among them the frigate which bore the two chiefs of the expedition, Hoche and the Admiral de Galles.

The circumstances, however, were propitious. The chiefs of the Irish association came and promised their powerful assistance. No English force was at hand, or had been warned. The weather was calm; everything, in fine, favoured a landing, for which Hoche had left precise orders in writing. In the absence of Hoche the command fell upon General de Grouchy, the oldest of the generals of division. The latter ordered Rear-Admiral Bouvet, chief of the naval division, to send for his two colleagues, Richery and Nielly. He told them that he had no special instructions in case of the absence of the general-in-chief; but he added that he would act in accordance with the orders received, and do his duty. He then commanded the three admirals to sail into the Bay of Bantry with their divisions, and to effect a landing without delay, such as ordered by General Hoche.

Bouvet alone obeyed;¹ he entered into the bay, the depth of which was twenty-eight kilometres,² with seventeen ships, carrying seven thousand men of excellent troops, and made the first preparations necessary for landing.

The wind rose again on the 23rd December, and gave fears in the fleet of a tempest arising whilst at anchor in an unprotected place. Admiral Bouvet believed his ships in danger, and thought the landing difficult with troops too

¹ *Obéir* governs *à* when followed by an object.

² *Kilomètre*; about a thousand metres. The metre is equivalent to 3 feet, 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches.

few in number besides to obtain in the island any serious result; seeing moreover the admirals, Richery and Nielly, keeping with their nineteen ships outside of the bay, and more disposed to take them back to France than to land the troops in Ireland. Presuming at last that the frigate which bore Hoche and the Admiral-in-Chief had been either captured or wrecked, Bouvet changed his resolution, and followed the example of his colleagues.

Setting at defiance the command and even the threats of General Grouchy, who, in his order of the day of the 24th December, ordered an immediate landing, Admiral Bouvet gave order to cut the cables, left the Bay, and with his colleagues steered towards France. The fleet was again scattered by the winds, and at last, on the 1st of January, a fortnight after having left the port of Brest filled with boldness and hope, it returned thither tempest-tossed and disabled.* On that very day Hoche and the Admiral, after having run the greatest dangers to escape the cruisers of the enemies, themselves entered the Bay of Bantry. Hoche found there neither the fleet nor his army, and when he heard that they had come, that the army had not landed, and that the fleet had taken it back to France, he was seized with frightful despair, and would have pursued it to return with it to Ireland, had it not been that his vessel was again assailed by furious tempests for three weeks, and he only re-entered Brest after an absence of more than a month. He found the fleet unable to put to sea at once, and he deferred until another time his great enterprise on the other side of the Channel.†

*All these facts, supported by irrefutable documents, have been produced with perfect exactness in the pamphlet written by the General, Marquis de Grouchy, to defend the memory of General Grouchy, his father, to the conduct of whom M. Bergounioux and other historians have too lightly attributed the failure of the Irish expedition. General Grouchy, brought back to France in spite of himself, denounced before the Directory the conduct of Admiral Bouvet, and provoked his dismissal.

†The Second Legion of the Franks, commanded by Colonel Tale, after having disembarked in England according to the instructions

Thus were destroyed by destiny all the hopes which Hoche had formed for an expedition prepared with so much care and at so great an expense. He conceived the bitterest grief in consequence ; but he soon obtained from the Directory a command on the Rhine worthy of his ambition and of his genius, and was named in January, 1797, General-in-Chief of the Army of Sambre-et-Meuse.

VII.

HOCHE GENERAL-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMY OF SAMBRE-ET-MEUSE.—CAMPAIGN OF 1797 ON THE RHINE.

Sambre-et-Meuse ! Glorious name, dear to all French hearts ! What souvenirs it recalls ! What famous exploits, how many victories ! Wattignies, Wissemburg, Fleurus ! Belgium conquered, the Rhine brought under subjection, the Danube threatened. The Army of Sambre-et-Meuse, in which the Army of Moselle had been merged, had accomplished all these great things. It was composed of heroic men, hardened to fatigue, inured to all perils, able to defy Europe. Enthusiasm had not disappeared from their hearts, the disinterested love of liberty yet inflamed the soul of the soldiers and of their chiefs ; and those chiefs were Le Fèvre, Grenier, Richepanse, Ney, Championnet, and many others, predestined, as these, to a glorious renown. This army had been led the preceding year (1797) by Jourdan into the heart of Germany as far as the frontiers of Bohemia ; then it had been driven back, with that of Moreau, by the skilful manœuvres of the Archduke Charles, and after¹ having lost two battles, it had fallen back on the Rhine. Jourdan, whose glory lost nothing by his reverses, but for whom the

received, was soon surrounded by superior forces, and all were made prisoners of war. The English Government, having heard of what unworthy elements this legion was composed, thought it might render a service to France by keeping it in its pontoons. It caused it therefore to re-embark, and returned it whole to France, whence it had been cast on the British coast.

¹ *Après* ; note well the construction of the verb here.

hour of repose had come, had asked permission to retire, and had been replaced by Beurnonville ; it was the latter whom Hoche succeeded.

The Army of Sambre-et-Meuse then occupied on the Rhine the advanced positions of Dusseldorf and of Neuwied, and was supported on the right by the Army of the Rhine, commanded by Moreau, whilst Bonaparte, having Alvinzi in front, was preparing to destroy, at Rivoli, the last army that Austria had in Italy. Such was, in January, 1797, the situation of the French armies, on the eve of making a decisive effort to dictate peace to Austria. The name of Hoche, the gallant conqueror of Wissemburg, had been received by the Army of Sambre-et-Meuse as the omen of new victories, and it welcomed its new general with enthusiasm. A great change had taken place in him in three years. He had yet the same devotion to the Revolution and to the Republic, and his fiery heart yearned ever for glory and for the fatherland ; but matured before time by the habit of command, to the impetuous excitement, to the brilliant language of the general of the old Army of Moselle, had succeeded a cold dignity and a laconic mode of expression. He had felt the need of imposing further respect to chiefs older than himself—men already illustrious and who had become his subordinates, with whom he showed himself dignified, cold, reserved, and who was now only familiar in intimacy. A new and dangerous disposition, too frequently adopted by military chiefs—contempt for civil authority and the citizens—found momentary access in his heart. On the other hand, to establish in France a free and stable government, he had little confidence in the intervention of the multitude by universal suffrage ;* by losing many illusions, he also felt sometimes his respect for legal rule growing weak, and the facts which he had then under his eyes were but little fitted to inspire

* "The people which suffers," he wrote to the Directory, "is always desirous of some improvement or other, and it believes it will find this in ceaseless changes."

him with other thoughts. His army was wanting in necessary things in a conquered country, where commissariat officers named by the Legislative Councils satiated themselves with the substance of the populations ruled by them. Hoche obtained permission from the Directory to substitute the law to dismiss, without the assistance of the two councils, these prevaricating agents. He took in hand, by his own authority, the supreme management of all the territory occupied by his army, and he gave the direct rule of it to those who had it before the conquest, to the bailiffs and even to the diocesan chapters. Hoche instituted, to watch over them, a superior commission, composed of men of great probity, whom he declared elected for life; and he leased out the taxes, the payment of which this commission was ordered to receive. The public service was then safe; the soldier was fed, clothed and provided with shoes, at the expense of the conquered provinces. Hoche then remounted his cavalry and his artillery; he even offered provisions to his colleague, Moreau, whose army was in want of them, and he enabled his own to win new victories.

Reinforced by thirty thousand men of the Army of the Sea Shore, it presented a splendid effective force of ninety thousand soldiers. Hoche divided his infantry into three corps; he entrusted the right to Le Fèvre, the left to Championnet, the centre to Grenier. He reassembled his army in large masses, grouped according to the different arms. On the right he placed the light cavalry under Richepanse; Klein commanded the dragoons on the left wing; Ney the hussars in the centre, and d'Hautpoul the heavy cavalry forming the reserve.

Hoche's plan was to cross the river at the end of March, and to combine his movements with those of the Army of the Rhine, commanded on his right by Moreau. This army was not yet ready. Moreau, according to his established custom, would not commence operations before his troops were perfectly provisioned and supplied with all the material of war indispensable to a campaign. They were not prepared, and wanted also boats to cross the Rhine.

Hoche, impatient and anxious to fight, sent to Moreau temporary bridges, and told him that on the 17th of April he would cross the river with or without his aid, and that he would attack the Austrians.

The latter, under the orders of Field-Marshal Warneck and Kray, had accumulated formidable means of defence between Mayence and Dusseldorf; the head of the bridge before Neuwied was beset with batteries and obstacles; in the neighbourhood all the houses were battlemented, and here and there redoubtable arrays of cannons of large calibre defended the position which Hoche was preparing to attack.

On the 17th of April¹ Championnet received the order to leave Dusseldorf, to pass the Sieg, and to attack the Austrians in the rear. He obeyed; Warneck, informed of his manœuvres, concentrated his forces at Diersdorf to overwhelm him; but he thus weakened, in front of Hoche, the corps of Marshal de Kray, who was defending Neuwied. The mass of the French forces in the night between the 17th and 18th assembled at Andernach, and before day-break the army crossed the river at Neuwied and drew up in the plain. On the point of being attacked, Kray came to a parley and asked for a short truce. Hoche demanded that the celebrated fortress of Ehrenbreitstein should be given up to him, and that the Austrian army should withdraw behind the Lahn, conditions which a conquered army alone could accept. Kray rejected them, ordered the fire to commence, and covered the plain with ball and shell. The French army then advanced; nothing could resist its onslaught;² the lines of the enemy were forced, its cavalry thrown over, its formidable redoubts were overthrown and stormed with the bayonet. Hoche pursued the Austrians into the mountains, then he marched on Diersdorf to assist Championnet; the latter had passed the Sieg the preceding night and carried the heights of Ukerath and Altenkirchen. Hoche met on his way near Diersdorf³ an Austrian reserve

¹ Note well the absence of the preposition in French.

² *Choc*; *c* sounded.

³ *Près* is usually followed by *de*.

of about eight thousand men : he attacked and put it to flight, whilst on the right De Fèvre also defeated the enemy, and pursued it closely¹ as far as Montabauer.

Such was the day of the 18th April (29 germinal²) in which the Austrians, forced in their entrenchments, were driven beyond the Lahn and over the Mein, after having lost eight thousand men, seven flags, twenty-seven mortars and sixty cannons. The French also occupied Diersdorf, Altenkirchen and Montabauer.

Victory with Hoche only acted as a stimulant ; it incited him to hasten to new triumphs. A conqueror at Neuwied, at the head of an army of 86,000 men, he felt able to repel the Austrians as far as the Danube. Already, driving Warneck before him, he had waged several glorious combats, and he was taking the necessary steps to cut off his retreat and separate him from Austria. His vanguard, commanded by Le Fèvre, was marching rapidly on Frankfurt ; it had crossed the Nidda, and was preparing to attack the place and to charge the enemy, when a courier arrived. bearer of the preliminaries of peace signed by Bonaparte at Leoben.

Hoche immediately suspended his glorious march, giving up the almost certain glory of forcing an Austrian army to lay down its arms. He only showed the satisfaction of seeing the shedding of blood stopped, and he wrote to the Directory to bear witness of this : " After having travelled," he said, " over thirty-five leagues in four days, triumphed in three battles and five skirmishes, the Army of Sambre-et-Meuse welcomed the news of peace with deep emotion."

Hoche addressed at the same time these simple lines to his wife, as a pure expression of an affectionate heart, and in which one recognizes, as well as the hero, the husband and the father : " Peace is proclaimed, my darling ; your husband is conqueror, in good health, and embraces you ; take care of our dear child."

¹ Literally, the sword in the back,

² *Germinal* ; from *germen*, first month of spring.

The hostilities having been suspended between France and Austria, Hoche thought again ardently of Ireland ; it was through her that he wished to reach and strike the English Government, in which he ever saw the most redoubtable enemy of France. Acting in concert with Admiral Truguet, he took all the necessary dispositions to prepare a new armament more formidable than the preceding one. The works in the harbour in Brest were renewed with activity, the old ships were repaired, new ones were built. Hoche, although at a distance, filled all souls with the enthusiasm of his own ; he sent to the Minister of Marine the savings which he had effected on the taxes of the conquered countries ; then he hastened into Holland to come to an understanding with the Batavian Republic, then an ally of the French Republic, and planned with the principal land and sea officers a simultaneous descent of the French and Dutch troops on the coasts of Ireland. Having returned to the camp of the Rhine, Hoche sent a numerous detachment of the Army of Sambre-et-Meuse, and repaired at last to Paris to hasten the preparations for the new expedition, and also, it must be said, to second the conspiracy of the majority of the Directory against the legislative bodies, and to prepare with them the *coup-d'état* of the 18th fructidor.

VIII.

COUP-D'ETAT OF FRUCTIDOR.¹—ILLNESS AND DEATH OF GENERAL HOCHÉ.

It was impossible that a state of things so horrible as the Reign of Terror should not provoke a violent reaction of a long duration, and that the men who had established it should not soon be subjected to public hate and to general horror. This reaction, commenced on the 9th thermidor, 1794, continued during the following years with an ever increasing violence, sustained by a cause which historians

¹ *Fructidor*, the twelfth month of the republican calendar. *Fructus*, fruit.

have not sufficiently kept in view. The Reign of Terror had fallen, but most of those who had inaugurated it did not fall with it. A few scoundrels had perished, but the greatest number of those members of the Convention who had sustained them by their votes had remained, and were masters of the situation. The Convention survived a year after Robespierre, and when it withdrew from the scene, it was revived with fresh vigour under other names. It proclaimed and managed to make a number of enthusiastic and honest Republicans believe—General Hoche among the number—that the Revolution was incarnate in the members of the Convention, and it did violence to public opinion by declaring, by the decrees of fructidor (year three), that two-thirds of its members would constitute a part of the new Legislative Councils, of which they would thus form the majority.

After the promulgation of these decrees, and the day of the 13th vendémiaire,¹ when the Convention shot down the Parisian citizens who had rejected them, and who protested against them by open force, the two Legislative Councils, that of the Ancients and that of the Cinq-Cents, the two-thirds of which were formed of old members of the Convention, sought a guarantee against reaction by choosing the five members of the Directory invested with the executive power amongst the most compromised of the regicides* in the eyes of the Royalists.

The opposition, conquered in vendémiaire, awaited its success from the new elections† and from the lawful course of events; it was predominant in the electoral body, better constituted then than it has been perhaps in any epoch of our history. The elections were of two degrees, and the electors combined with the authority of number that authority, not less necessary, of presumed ability. Their

* Thus were called those whose votes had sent Louis XVI. to the scaffold.

† A third of the members of councils were re-elected every year.

¹ *Vendémiaire*, first month of the republican calendar. *Vindémio*, harvest.

choice was, in the year four, as the preceding year, the faithful expression of the ruling opinion, that of the spirit of reaction against the terrorists and the Montagnards, and that of the constitutional and moderate party, friendly to the principles of 1789, and who saw with terror the executive power vested ever in the hands of the members of the Convention and the rebels.

The two Legislative Councils, after the election of the second third of their members, were then composed in a great measure of men who, without wishing a counter-revolution, wished nevertheless, as well as peace, to have the abolition of the revolutionary laws still in force,* a real liberty and the successive and legal cleansing of a Directory the heir of the Convention.

The names of a few ardent Royalists, it is true, had been brought forth at the last elections. The latter, faithful to the constant tactics of the minorities, considered their cause one with the constitutional and moderate majority, and sought by all means possible to create a disturbance and to increase their importance. In this they were but too well seconded by three directors—Barras, Rewbell and La Reveillère-Lepeaux†—and by their Montagnard friends, who said aloud and published in their papers that the whole opposition was monarchical, that power was about¹ to pass to the Royalists, that the Bourbons and the aristocrats would soon reappear, and that it was all over with the Revolution.‡

*These laws closed the churches and proscribed the priests; they decreed penalty of death and confiscation against the refugees, and many other *draconian* measures. (Draco, an Athenian legislator, who enacted that all crimes should be punished by death).

† These three directors constituted the majority in the Directory, where they were opposed by Carnot and Barthélemy; the latter had been recently elected by the moderate party in the place of Letourneur.

‡ In his impartial "History of the Directory," M. de Barante has presented in its right light that epoch which has been made obscure by historians belonging to the extreme and most opposed parties.

¹ *Allait passer.* *Aller*, before an infinitive, denotes being on the point of performing the action which that infinitive expresses.

These threatening reports, exaggerated by fears, were believed, especially at a distance, by many honest people sincerely devoted to the Revolution, enthusiasts for liberty, which they saw almost exclusively in civil equality, in the maintaining of the republican rule, and in national independence. General Hoche, as we have said, belonged to this number. Having ascended rapidly, by his merit, from the lowest rank to the highest, he had always before his eyes, in the old order of things where he risked vegetating in an obscure position, those shackles which might have restrained his progress, and all the obstacles which he would have met in a society constituted as it was under the abolished rule.

Resembling in that the greatest number of men who have owed their elevation only to themselves, he did not like in principle, and considered as suspicious, all privileged persons, whether kings or noblemen ;¹ * he deemed the first tyrants, the second their natural supporters or accomplices, in the privileges which had made them what they were the greatest obstacle to liberty, and in these privileges liberty itself. Hoche thus confounded equality with liberty ; he had not sufficiently studied the true conditions of the existence of political franchise, the only guarantee of all the others ; he seemed to ignore that the representation of a people cannot be truly national except as far as it is the free and true expression of the public will ; he forgot, in short, that liberty only exists as long as the law reigns, and that the law is only supreme if the legislator is inviolable.

Hoche considered the fate of the Republic as bound to the policy of the Directory, which tended to revolutionize

*In the daily affairs of life, this disposition often gave way in him to very earnest affection for men belonging to the class of the old privileged persons, especially for those who served under his orders, and we have seen also that he preserved a grateful friendship for the General Count Le Veneur, whose aide-de-camp he had been. He had even the happiness in the last moments of his life of rendering an important service to his old general and friend.

¹ Note that *gentilshommes* must not be translated by gentlemen

Europe, and to maintain the revolutionary laws, which proscribed the refugees and armed the Government with extraordinary powers; in his eyes the true patriots, the only defenders of the Revolution and of liberty, were the three Directors and their partizans who wished to preserve at any cost these exceptional laws; whilst those who wished to annul them and to substitute a lawful and moderate rule were in his estimation Royalists, adversaries of liberty, enemies yet to be destroyed.

Hoche arrived in Paris, and imparted to the Government his fears with regard to the progress of royalism in the midst of the Legislative Councils, and said that it was indispensable to triumph over this, if need be, by force. He conferred particularly with Barras, and he offered to assist any active undertaking of the directors against the electoral majority and legislative power. He sent, in concert with him, two of his divisions commanded by Richepanse to Brest, under pretext of making them take part in a new expedition against Ireland; he made them pass at a short distance from Paris, and made them take up their quarters at La Ferté-Alais, on this side of the limits fixed by the Constitution for the troops who should not be called to the capital by legislative authority itself.* The arrival of these troops in the neighbourhood of Paris, and within a prohibited distance, coincided with a ministerial remodelling, in which Hoche was designated as Minister of War.

The Council of the Cinq-Cents was excited at this; it believed itself in peril, and declared the Constitution violated if the troops did not take a retrograde movement as far as the limits that it had fixed. It opposed at the same time the projected promotion of Hoche to the Ministry of War, alleging that he had not reached the legal age for ministerial functions, and it demanded that the Directory should give an account of its conduct. Out of the five directors, three only

*By virtue of the Constitution, it was forbidden to the troops to approach within a radius of twelve leagues of the place where the Legislative Councils were in session, unless a law was passed to that effect.

wanted a *coup-d'état* against the Councils ; the two others, Carnot and Barthélemy, opposed themselves to it, and persisted in wishing to remain within the pale of the law. Carnot occupied then the presidency of the Directorial Council ; he called upon General Hoche to account before the assembled directors for his absence from his army, his presence in Paris, and the orders given to the troops who had gone beyond the constitutional limits. Hoche pleaded ignorance ; he said that General Richepanse had received orders to take his division to Brest, and that undoubtedly he was ignorant that La Ferté-Alais was within the prohibited circle. He had reckoned on Barras to defend him, and Barras was silent. La Reveillère-Lepeaux interceded, and put an end to this severe and perilous cross-questioning. Hoche not being sustained by the Government, seeing besides the Directory uncertain and the *coup-d'état* deferred, ordered his divisions to take a retrograde movement as far as Alsace, left Paris and returned to his headquarters at Wetzlar. But alarm had penetrated the legislative majority, which feared very justly a *coup-d'état*, and the adversaries of Hoche had recourse to all possible means, even the most odious ones, to ruin his credit and destroy his popularity. General Willot, his personal enemy, denounced him openly before the Council of the Cinq-Cents as aspiring to play the part of Marius ; another member, Dufresne Saint Léon, accused him of having only deposited in the public treasury a small part of the sums raised on the territories which his army occupied, by the financial commission which he had arbitrarily instituted, and he gave it to be understood that without doubt Hoche had kept the rest for himself and his staff. Hoche, it is true, had only deposited a part of those sums in the coffers of the state ; he had reserved another portion for the eventual needs of the Government, and with the rest he had nourished and kept his soldiers, preferring to use these resources rather than have recourse¹ to the

¹ *Recourir*. Note well the strong accentuation given to the double *r* in the future of this verb.

greedy contractors and speculators whom he had driven away from his army.

The illustrious General Jourdan, a member of the Council of the Cinq-Cents, could not in cool blood listen to the calumniating accusation directed against the one whom he considered as the honour of the French armies, and, although belonging to the threatened majority, he rose with indignation and said: "Often the armies would have perished from starvation if the generals-in-chief had not used the taxes levied in conquered countries. I commanded one hundred and fifty thousand men, and I have the proofs that the Government paid a set of scoundrels for one hundred and fifty thousand rations per day, and that the army only received ten thousand. It was then necessary that the generals should bestir themselves in keeping the rest of the army alive. It is not in the power of any one to make me believe that General Hoche has committed any other crime, and those guilty as he have right to obtain the thanks of a grateful fatherland."

This shining tribute, given by so great a man, to his integrity, rendered less bitter for Hoche a calumny against which he at once protested by demanding a public trial. But the unjust reproaches to which he had seen himself a prey in the midst of the Legislative Councils, of which he had excited the alarm, keenly irritated him. He believed that the majority had determined upon his ruin to be more free to accomplish its contra-revolutionary projects; he wished to return threat for threat to his adversaries, and, having assembled his generals in a patriotic banquet to solemnize the fête of the 10th of August, the last day of the monarchy, he drank to the Republic, and said: "Friends, peace is about to be signed; but I must not conceal it from you, you cannot yet lay down those terrible arms by which you have so often obtained victory. Before doing this, perhaps we shall have to make sure of the tranquillity of the interior, which rebels against the laws of the Republic are trying to disturb." But Hoche's progress in this direction was drawing to a close. Already death was in

his heart, that premature death which places the glorious deeds of good men in safety, and protects them from the reverses of fortune. He had felt at Brest, the preceding year, the first attack of an unknown disease, which increased in intensity at Wetzlar; he soon fell seriously ill, and the report was spread that he had been poisoned. He was, in the eyes of the Royalists, the most resolute and bravest champion of the republican government; as such he was open to criminal attacks, and he had before escaped as if by a miracle from an assassin hired by his enemies;* his life was known to be threatened, and each new crisis of a disease which seemed inexplicable was believed to be a mark of an attempt against his person.

Distracted by a dry cough, devoured by an inward and devouring fever, he was a prey to nervous irritation, and fell into spasms which left him completely exhausted. He was pining away in this painful state when he heard of the violent action of the 18th fructidor, executed against the Legislative Councils by the three directors, Barras, La Reveillère-Lepeaux and Rewbell. This news, impatiently expected and of which he did not foresee the consequences, caused him the liveliest joy and restored his strength. The Directory, however, had had recourse to odious means to succeed in its enterprise,† and had imposed on itself a long series of tyrannical acts without ever being able to stop within the law, until the not far distant day when, in its turn, it fell a despised victim by the *coup-d'état* of bru-

* Returning one evening from the theatre at Rennes, as he re-entered his residence a shot was fired point-blank at him and did not touch him. The assassin, who confessed his crime, was seized, and he designated as his accomplice an old chief of the Chouans. Hoche solicited their pardon in vain—they perished on the scaffold.

† The principal means to which the three directors had recourse to prolong their authority were: The transportation to Cayenne of their two colleagues, Carnot and Barthélemy, of fifty-nine members of the two Legislative Councils, and forty journalists; the suspension of the liberty of the press; and the resumption of the revolutionary measures against the refugees and the priests.

maire.* Hoche did not foresee this, and hailed with enthusiasm the liberty which he believed saved by the day of fructidor, whilst, on the contrary, it was irretrievably lost.

A few days afterward, the Directory dismissed General Moreau, who had lost its confidence, and gave his army to General Hoche, who thus united the command of the two armies of Sambre-et-Meuse and that of the Rhine. But his strength gave way again; a prey to the fever which devoured him, he represented himself as being clothed, like Hercules, with the poisoned robe of the Centaur. His doctor, Poussielgue, ordered necessary repose; but for that ardent nature, of which action was the natural element, inaction was more a fatigue than a relief. He appeared resigned, however, and repaired to the fair at Frankfort to take a little recreation; he met there some famous quack who promised to cure him without imposing inactivity; Hoche secretly took his remedies, and his condition soon became desperate. He read his sentence in the eyes of Poussielgue, saw he was dying, and gently resigned himself to his fate. He wished once more to receive his friends and his companions in arms, and he did so with a calm air, whilst at the foot of his bed his young wife stifled her sobs. He conversed about an hour with them, thanking them for their affection, and even endeavouring to smile. He also spoke of public affairs, and referred to the *coup-d'état* of fructidor, which he always judged indispensable. Nevertheless, better informed, at his last moment he recognized that it was fortunate that none of the generals who were commanders-in-chief of the armies of the Republic had participated in this act of violence, and that Augereau, in executing it by the order of the three directors, had appeared to obey the civil powers; a republic, he said, should always be served and not protected by the sword.

* On that day, 19th brumaire, year eight (10th November, 1799), Gen. Bonaparte, who had recently returned from Egypt, expelled the Council of the Cinq-Cents at St. Cloud, arrested three directors, and annulled the constitution of the year three. He was afterwards elected First Consul.

This last effort had exhausted him ; he dismissed his lieutenants, and towards evening he fell asleep. After a few hours of repose he awoke with spasms. He was speechless ; he had a terrible crisis, and on the 19th September, 1797, he expired gently in the arms of his wife and of General Debelle, his brother-in-law.*

Hoche was scarcely twenty-nine, and his renown, like that of his young and brilliant rival, the conqueror of Arcole and of Rivoli,¹ filled Europe. What could describe the grief of his companions in arms, the despair of his soldiers? The whole army offered to its chief an affectionate and imposing funeral. It was decided that he should be buried at Pétersberg, in the intrenched camp of Coblenz, alongside of a young hero, like him carried off in the flower of his youth, in the midst of a glorious career, and who left a grand name behind him—General Marceau.

The funeral procession left Wetzlar on the 21st September, and advanced towards Coblenz. The aides-de-camp of Hoche, the generals, and all the staff, escorted the funeral car, before which were carried the standards and flags draped with crape. The procession thus advanced to the dull sound of muffled drums, and to the solemn tone of the bells rung by the inhabitants of the cities and large villages which it traversed. The peasants of the neighbourhood hastened in numbers to join the procession of the General, from whom they had received tokens of commiseration, and who had lightened for them the burdens of war.

The body was received with honour at Braunfels by the sovereign prince, who awaited it on the public square at the head of all the members of his household. When it passed at the foot of the famous ramparts of the citadel of Ehrenbreitstein, guarded by the Austrians, it was saluted by all the batteries of the place and by the firing of the

* His body was opened, and in the stomach were found a few specks, where it was thought that marks of poison could be traced ; marks sufficient to warrant suspicions, but too weak to confirm them.

¹ Napoléon Bonaparte.

garrison assembled in battle array on the glacis. The governor advanced from the gates to receive it, and conducted the body to the banks of the Rhine, between a double line formed by the soldiers of France and Austria. The procession passed through Coblenz, then wended its way towards the heights of Pétersberg, where a part of the army was under arms to receive it. There a modest monument, which a great poet has celebrated in immortal verse, contained the remains of Marceau.* This simple tomb, for which Hoche had subscribed out of his savings a short time before his death, contains the bodies of the two heroes. The body of Hoche was lowered in it after having received the *adieux* of his comrades. Le Fèvre, Championnet and Grenier paid a just tribute to their general in military language, simple and true ; after them a grenadier advanced, presented arms before the coffin, placed a wreath of oak leaves, saying, "Hoche, in the name of the army, receive this wreath," and he burst into tears. His tears expressed better than any words the feelings of all.

Hoche was no more, but he still lived in the hearts of his soldiers and of his co-citizens. France herself deeply felt his loss, and public sorrow was shown in the solemn obsequies with which the Government honoured his memory. On the 1st of October following, in Paris, all the bodies of the State, the people and the army, were assembled by the Directory in the Champ de Mars for this fête, at which the illustrious Daunou pronounced the funeral oration of the

* That which Lord Byron has said of Marceau, may in many respects be applied to Hoche, to whom the poet has equally rendered homage. "Near Coblenz, on a smiling hill, is a simple and modest pyramid crowning the summit of a green mound : under its base rests a hero. . . . Rapid and triumphant was his flight. All have wept for him, friends and enemies, and the foreigner who stops here to meditate, may justly pray for the repose of his generous mind, for he was the best champion of liberty. He was among those, too few, alas ! who have not overstepped the just limits which she assigns to the warriors whom she arms with her sword. His soul remained spotless ; that is why men have wept for him."

hero, and was the eloquent interpreter of the grief of the nation.

Such was the brilliant though too short career of Lazare Hoche, who excited the admiration of all, even of his enemies, and who obtained a most enviable glory at the age when the most illustrious commence to attract attention. He had in an eminent degree that character peculiar to great men, of always appearing superior to their position ; the more he rose the greater he seemed, and it is recognized by common accord that his success, if he had lived, would have had no limit except that traced by duty and marked out by himself. His whole life bears the stamp of true greatness. In contemplating it the soul is elevated, and feels inclined to practise self-abnegation, devotion and great actions. His most prominent points were loyalty, magnanimity, ardent patriotism, the worship of honour, and a devouring activity, for which repose was an intolerable suffering. To these grand traits we must add the disinterestedness of an ambition which had no other aim but the welfare of his country, a kind compassion for the miseries of the unfortunate, an integrity so natural as not to appreciate its own worth. " You recommend me," he wrote to his young wife, " to think of the fortune of our child. I shall leave her a spotless name ; it is all I owe her." Never did a general possess better the heart of his army. " Love," he often said, " if you would be loved." It was in this manner, by loving his soldiers, that he became their idol. His property was theirs, and his generosity knew no bounds. " You would have in your purse 200,000 francs more," said one of his relations to him, " if you did not give what you possess right and left." " I should have a million less," replied Hoche, " in that of my friends, if I had need of it." To meet in this respect, among the heroes of history, a captain worthy of being compared to him, we must go back to Du Guesclin, whose life I have related before his, and whom Hoche resembled in many ways. We admire in them the same generosity, the same heroism, the same com-

miseration for the wretched, the same horror for knaves and for the bloodsuckers of the poor. They both had, before the enemy, perfect possession of their own faculties, a rapid glance and a sudden inspiration ; they displayed an equal proportion of caution in preparations, impetuosity in accomplishing, and, despising routine, they caused military art to progress, and showed the instinct of great innovations germs of modern strategies and tactics. Both, in short, had the good fortune of conquering every time that they had the chief command, and the bitter regret of dying in their beds, after having passed their lives in the midst of perils and on the battle field.

Hoche had this great advantage over Bertrand du Guesclin, that he was born in a more enlightened epoch of civilization, and he understood the superiority that the culture of letters gives, and the enjoyments which it procures. Bertrand could not read, and never was troubled about it ; Hoche, on the contrary, always regretted that he had only received in his childhood too limited an education, and he did all in his power to make up for his deficiencies. He read, he studied in the camps ; the ancient authors, and above all the historians of Greece and Rome, had a powerful attraction for him ; he found in their writings a source of republican virtue from which his honest soul drank with delight, and he felt powerfully attracted by those great chiefs who, whilst laying down their glorious sword, felt proud to drive the plough. He gained a great deal by his study of antiquity ; one perceives it especially in the style of his proclamations and his orders of the day, losing, as they did by degrees, that declamatory style in use then in the official language, to attain a pure, stern precision of eloquence. Hoche obtained taste through the application of a delicate mind and of rare good sense to the study of great models ; and after having, in his early youth, read a great deal without rule and without choice, he learned to discriminate, to choose, and to give excellent counsels to his young wife to guide her in her readings ; he sought to

form her taste by enlightening her mind ; and at an epoch when the enthusiasm for Rousseau's works was at its height, Hoche did not give a slight proof of his common sense by abstaining from the general contagion ; he discovered exaggeration, paradox, falsehood, even through the magic of too seductive a style, and he took care to forewarn his wife against the perils of this reading. Several of his letters are full of delicate and charming details ; all breathed the pride of an upright, strong, independent mind, and in a few of them one perceives the extreme importance which he attached to the education of women as well as to that of men, and to all which tends to develop at an early age, in all minds, vigour, energy and sincerity. All in him tended to the same end : words, writings and actions. His disposition offers to the attentive observer a type harmonious and grand in every detail as in the whole.

A few dark sides are also found in his disposition ; Hoche always had a great deal of trouble in doing violence to his nature, ardent, impetuous and an enemy of every restraint ; as impressionable as passionate, he passed rapidly from one resolution to another, sometimes altogether opposite, as in the epoch of the expedition of Ireland, which he abandoned one day to undertake it again the next. He was subject to dejection of mind and to temporary weaknesses ; but the latter sometimes proceeded from error of judgment, sometimes from excessive irritation or from painful deception, never from any vice. Soon his great reason, his firm and loyal heart, assumed their pre-eminence, and led him back in the right path, towards his true aim. He had a few of the prejudices of his time and of his personal situation ; he committed errors, he risked placing in peril the liberty of his country whilst believing that he was serving it ; he was mistaken, but in good faith ; his intentions remained pure. Liberty, which he loved with a love more sincere than enlightened, remained dear to him, and the great principles of 1789 were always sacred to him. But he wanted experience as well as every one else, with time

he would have recognized the true conditions of the existence of liberty in the midst of a great nation. Hoche would have understood that freedom can have no other foundation than respect for the rights of all, for legal order, and for public opinion firmly expressed ; never would he have preferred his own advantage to the good of his country, never either would he have based his fortune on the ruins of liberty. He was of the race of those who live again, in the Lives of Plutarch, for the honour of humanity ; he belonged to the great family of such men as Cimon, Phocion, Paul Æmilius, men by whom republics subsist or who fall with them.

APPENDIX.

NOTE A.

La Terreur in Paris.—By M. de Lamartine.

More than eight thousand suspected people filled the prisons of Paris a month before the death of Danton. In one single night three hundred families of the Faubourg St. Germain were cast into them ; all the great names of historical, military, parliamentary, episcopal France. The trouble of inventing a crime was not even taken ; their name was sufficient ; their riches denounced them ; their rank delivered them up. One was guilty for having lived in a certain district, for his rank, fortune, relationship, family, religion, opinion, for presumed sentiments ; in fact, there were neither innocent nor guilty ; there were no longer any but proscribers and proscribed. Neither age nor sex, nor old age nor childhood, nor infirmities which rendered all criminality naturally impossible, could save one from accusation and condemnation. Paralytic old men followed their sons ; children their fathers ; women their husbands ; daughters their mothers. One died for his name, another for his fortune, for having manifested his opinion, for his silence, for having served royalty, for having embraced the Republic with ostentation, for not having worshipped Marat, for having regretted the Girondins, for having emigrated, for having remained in his abode, for having starved the people by not spending his revenues, or for having displayed a luxury which was an insult to public misery. Reasons, suspicions, contradictory pretences, anything was adopted. It sufficed only to have informers in the district, and the law encouraged them by giving them a part of the confiscations. The people, at the same time informers, judges and heirs of their victims, looked forward to enriching themselves with confiscated possessions. When proscribers required some pretext for death they watched for true or feigned conspiracies in the prisons. Spies, disguised like prisoners, endeavoured to obtain confidences, sighs for liberty, plans of evasion among the prisoners, invented them sometimes, then revealed them to the public accuser. They wrote on their lists of information hundreds of names of suspected people who first heard of their crimes through their accusations ; this is what was called the *batches* of the guillotine. They created a cer-

tain vacuum in the cells . . . they kept up terror, they imposed silence on murmurs. Every day the number of the carts employed to conduct the condemned to the scaffold increased. At four o'clock they went across the bridge Au Change and the Rue St. Honoré towards the square of the Revolution. They took the longest way in order to prolong the spectacle for the mob, as well as the punishment for the victims. It was murder given as a spectacle and as an amusement to a whole people.—*History of the Girondins, Bk. LVI.*

NOTE B.

Inference of M. Claude Desprez as to the Capitulation called that of Quiberon.

As of this capitulation no traces can be found, says M. Desprez, therefore upon what foundation remains the report which has been handed to us? If on words which are attributed to Sombreuil after his conference with a republican chief, then we would rather believe Sombreuil himself in the matter. Twice he has spoken of the capitulation, on the faith of which the refugees "laid low their arms;" the first is in the letter which he wrote to Admiral Warren, in the following terms: "Having no more resources, I had recourse to a capitulation to save that which could not escape, and the general cry of the army replied to me that all who were refugees would be prisoners of war, and spared like the others."

The second letter is dated at Auray, and addressed to Hoche: "All your troops," said Sombreuil to him, "were engaged against the small number which remained to me, and which necessarily must have succumbed; but, sir, the word of those who came even into the ranks to give it to that small number should be a sacred thing for you."

One sees that in this second letter, as in the first, it is only a question of the cries of the soldiers, or, at most, the words of a few officers without authority. Yet if Sombreuil had treated with Hoche, or even with Humbert, he would not have failed to recall it, and to summon Hoche on his honour to cause the promises he had received from him to be respected. The answer of Hoche to this last letter has not reached us, but he caused the following lines to be inserted in the letter to Admiral Warren: "I owe it to the army to declare that there is an error in the letter which I published. I was at the head of the seven hundred grenadiers who captured M. de Sombreuil and his division; no soldier cried that the refugees would be treated as prisoners of war, which I should have contradicted immediately."

To so clear an affirmation we will only add one fact. A few months later Hoche commanded in La Vendée. One of his commandants, General Bonnaire, had some of the insurgents whom he

had taken in the Château of Saint-Mesmin, shot. Hoche was told that this happened after having promised them their lives. Hoche immediately ordered his arrest. Better informed, he countermanded this. . . . "I think," he wrote to him, "that you will not take in bad part a severity called for by honour." And he adds: "A man of honour could not have thus betrayed sworn faith." Let us come to the conclusion, then, that if the refugees believed that they were under the protection of a capitulation, it is because they took to themselves, the pardon promised by the republican soldiers only to the prisoners who had enlisted, and it was in consequence of this misunderstanding that they gave up a life which they could not longer defend; but let us proclaim aloud that they were not victims of a perfidy.—*Claude Desprez' Lazare Hoche, p. 214-217.*

NOTE C.

2 Thermidor, year four (20th July, 1796).—Decree of the Directory.

The Directory, wishing to give a testimony of its esteem to General Hoche, Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the Sea Shore, for the services which he has rendered to the country and to do honour in his person to the brave defenders who, under his orders, have terminated the long and unfortunate war of La Vendée and of the Chouans, decrees:

"In the name of the French Republic, a present is made to General Hoche of the two finest chargers in the depots of war, with their trappings; he will also receive a pair of pistols of the manufactory of arms at Versailles. CARNOT."

NOTE D.

Extract from the plan of Carnot for the organizing of Chouanism in England, and in which Hoche obtained the instructions given by him to the Second Legion of the Franks.

"The men employed in this expedition will require to be, as much as possible, young, robust, daring, of a mind accessible to the allurements of booty."

"They must follow the examples of what the filibusters did in the Antilles, know how to carry into the midst of their enemies terror and death."

"One might incorporate in these troops those condemned by judgment to carry irons or chains, in whom the physical and moral dispositions requisite for the individuals employed in this expedition might be recognized. The possession of the plunder taken might be offered to these individuals as an inducement. The quiet enjoyment of it might be promised them in some of our colonies. It

would be necessary, besides, to give to these convicts the hope that their sentences would be reprieved, as a reward for the services rendered to the fatherland."

"The first nucleus of these men, to the number of about two thousand, would be organized in companies of about fifty each, who would be officered, and would be under the immediate command of a single chief in full charge of the operations. This chief would be invested with superior authority."

"We must not lose sight of the fact, that an expedition attempted at first with so few people can only succeed by extraordinary means."

"It will not require great preparations in matter of clothing; the resources of the troop must be in its courage and in its arms."

"The landing must be effected on different points of the coast, either because desolation and terror, spread over a great extent of territory, will increase in the eyes of our enemies the number of our forces, or because the means of subsistence will be more easily obtained."

"On arriving, the chiefs will proclaim themselves and their soldiers the *avengers of liberty and the enemies of tyrants*."

"The legion must swear war to the châteaux and peace to the cottages, and that its conduct, above all at the outset, be in conformity with this declaration."

"As they advance they will open the prisons, will recruit the convicts and incorporate them; they will call on the workmen, the poor, the malcontents, to make common cause with them: will present them with arms and with food; will offer them the charms of plunder. They will destroy all carriages."

"The enemy must be pursued to the death when conquered, and no mercy for prisoners"

"The bridges must be broken, the communications intercepted, public conveyances arrested; burn everything which belongs to the navy; summon the communes to give up their arms; shoot all who resist."

NOTE E.

In a letter written from Meaux, and dated 26th pluviose, year five (14th February, 1797), Hoche gives an account to his brother-in-law, Debelle, of a patriotic fête which he witnessed on the occasion of the capture of Mantua. Having perceived the procession, he followed it and heard the speech of a municipal officer, who, in the

probable expectation of a royalist counter revolution, found means not to utter the compromising words "citizen" and "republic," in order to be ready for any emergency. Hoche, in recalling this, could not restrain his indignation: "Those are indeed our Frenchmen," he cried, "to be in turns constitutional with Lacour, moderate with Brissot, Jacobins under Robespierre, thermidorians with André Dumont, and Royalists, as a few violent demagogues became; such are the principles of that sheep-like class which is composed of the majority of well-to-do gentlemen, of the present public officials, of the lawyers, the attorneys, and middle class people, for whom a return to the old order of things is a sort of resurrection, . . . and whose opinion frequently expressed is, that what matters national opinion, public prosperity, commerce, the arts interfered with by continual reactions, provided that the soup is nice and hot, and that no taxes are required. Wretched set! . . . You merit your lot."

NOTE F.

Hoche acknowledged, says his biographer, M. Bergounioux, that a monarchical rule was more free than a republican rule, and yet he was altogether opposed to the re-establishment of royalty. . . . "Whoever the monarch might be," wrote Hoche, "and by the very fact alone of his being the monarch, he would struggle against the principle, against the very essence of the Revolution, which means the abolition of classes; he would be, in spite of himself, forced to re-establish a nobility, and the reviving of that nobility would prove the cause of his ruin by aggravating the commoners, who would no longer represent all or every one. Monarchy would fall by the fact alone of that scheme, new revolution. We want a government which will consecrate, by fact as well as right, the principle of equality . . . that government can only be the republican government"

As to the personnel of this government, Hoche added: "The following are my fundamental ideas: An elective president who may be re-elected; two assemblies, one entirely elective, the other only half elective.

Other documents prove how his ideas on political organization generally were yet undecided, impracticable, and sometimes contradictory. Thus, for example, his natural good sense put him on his guard against the dangers inseparable from universal suffrage; he saw with reason that the public vote was less a right than a function, and he was not ignorant that every function gives an idea of certain talent, at least presumed talent, in the one who fills it. "Every man," he said, "is not a citizen," and he feared to call the multitude to the public square to record their votes. Patriotism was not a sufficient guarantee for him. "The people who suffer,"

he wrote to the Directory, "is always desirous to obtain some amelioration or other, and it thinks it can find this by changing incessantly." However, in spite of this danger, Hoche adopted universal suffrage as the basis of election, but on the condition that it should be regulated and not become an abuse in the hands either of the aristocracy or of the democracy, from whom, he said, truly laborious, patriotic, honest France will be obliged long to defend herself. Hoche had devised for this end a system, good perhaps in theory but very difficult to put in practice; he wished that the press should be free, but that the proper names should be put beyond all discussion, and that there should be, with regard to the candidates in the elections, absolute absence of interference on the part of the Government and of the press; he wished, in fine, that they should only be designated by general consideration and public notoriety. "To act otherwise," he said to Chérin, "would be to facilitate the plots of the aristocracy and of the plebeians. These are two minorities which must be disarmed and hindered from creating too much disturbance. It is serving liberty to limit it with those who demand it only for the sake of oppression." To demand the liberty of the press in the face of universal suffrage, and at the same time to forbid to the press all intermeddling in the elections, is an anomaly which astonishes one in a man of such upright common sense, and which is only explained by the want of all practical experience.

NOTE G.

Extract from a letter written by Hoche to his Wife on the 9th June, 1795, on the Education of Girls.

In general, education in France is good for nothing, especially that given to women. We make of our girls giddy coquettes, or women like Agnes, whose timidity disgusts. The English understand these things better; their wives are retiring, learned; they speak to the point and know no timidity; they allow to girls the liberty of going out, of speaking to men; their mothers make them feel horror for vice, the fear of betrayal, and besides, they do not treat them as slaves. Thus, note well, my dear, that the very girl who near her parents is timid, and who never speaks without blushing, is scarcely married that she knows no more restraint. Why did her parents treat her as a slave, etc., etc.?